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A N
I N Q U I R Y,
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THE NATURE OF SUBSCRIPTION, TO THE THIRTY-
NINE ARTICLES.

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THE NATURE OF SUBSCRIPTION, TO THE THIRTY
NINE ARTICLES.

Edo.

A N
I N Q U I R Y,

INTO THE NATURE OF SUBSCRIPTION TO THE THIRTY-
NINE ARTICLES.

- I. How far is it consistent with the Natural Rights of Mankind?
- II. How far is it consistent with the Powers of the Human Mind?
- III. How far is it consistent with the Principles of the British Constitution?
- IV. How far is it consistent with the Doctrines and Precepts of Christianity?

By G. D Y E R. A.B.

LATE OF EMMANUEL COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR.

306.D.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE publication of the following work hath been delayed longer than the Author intended. He now submits it to the judgement and candour of those persons, who have kindly encouraged it by their Subscriptions. Neither his own mistakes, nor those of the Printer, he hopes, are greater than will readily be excused. Of the former some account is given in the Postscript. Such of the latter as have occurred, are corrected on the opposite page.

By G. DYER, A.B.

Printed at EMMAHURST COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE.

Printed for the Author.

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AN INQUIRY INTO THE NATURE OF
S U B S C R I P T I O N
TO THE
THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES.

EVERY man, who has judgement enough to form a religious opinion, should have the uprightness to support it. Most men, indeed, have the policy to profess an attachment to truth. It is said, that she is of divine original. The native dignity, which she wears, makes her respectable; the useful talents, which she professes, give her an air of importance. When therefore she claims our attention, we allow the justice of her claim; we rise up with, at least, a profession of respect, and scruple not to pay her a few compliments. Stet Veritas, ruat Mundus, becomes the general cry. How happy would it be for society, if these professions were always sincere!

FURTHER, all men, who live in society, and enjoy its advantages, should be interested in its happiness. It is the claim of justice and of benevolence. A person, uninfluenced by the social feeling, is properly an unique, and deserves to be doomed to solitude. But solitary ex-

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istence,

istence, by the generality of mankind, is conceived to be insupportable. Men therefore either must have, or at least profess to have, the social feeling, benevolence. How happy would it be for society, if their professions were always sincere! Man would then resemble the great Being, in whose likeness he was originally formed, and, by consulting the general good, answer the design of his original destination.*

ARE men then not sincere, when they profess an attachment to truth, and benevolence? I did not say so. But this, I think, will be granted, that sincerity is as forward to practice, as she is to profess. We have daily intercourse with social beings, like ourselves. And there are actions, by which individuals in common life must every day give proof of the sincerity of their professions. These actions become the ground of mutual confidence, the basis of civil society. With men, moving in collective bodies, such proofs cannot be so frequent. Periods, however, occur, when a test is demanded. For public bodies have a day of trial as well as individuals, and should on those days maintain a consistency of profession and practice, if they would obtain a general confidence, and secure a lasting respect.

SUCH periods are those, when applications are made for the removal of public grievances: and all human formularies of faith are public grievances. What professions are more common in the mouths of the learned, when discoursing on the subject of Subscription, than these?

* Εὐ γὰρ δὴ ὁ ἀποφηνάμενος τι Θεοῖς ὁμοίον ἔχουσιν. Εὐεργεσίαν εἶπε καὶ Ἀληθείαν. Longinus περὶ Ὑψους. Sect. I.

these? Our articles, we allow, are capable of amendment; Subscription, we acknowledge, might be meliorated, if not wholly removed; our Church Forms, we cannot deny, would admit improvement. Now an application for redress, is putting the question, Have your professions any meaning?

SUCH applications have been made to the supreme authority in this nation. Such applications have been made to the University of Cambridge.* I wish I could add, that they had been attended with a success, equal to their importance. In the years 1772, and 1773, the Protestant Dissenters presented petitions to the house of commons to be relieved from subscribing to the Articles of the Church.† At that time every licensed minister was obliged to profess his belief of 36 Articles and an half. They have since been relieved from that oppression and now profess their belief of the Scriptures. About the same time many Clergymen of the Established Church presented a similar address: but this gained no relief.‡ It reflects indeed honour on the University of Cambridge

* The first grace for this purpose was proposed by Mr. Tyrwhitt of Jesus college in 1771. Jebb's Works, Vol. I. P. 207. The last by Dr. Edwards in 1787. both were rejected by the caput. Vid. Friend's Thoughts on Subscription.

† Vid. Arcana, or the Principles of the Dissenting Petitioners by Mr. Robinson.

‡ Vid. Vindiciæ Priestleyianæ by Mr. Lindsey. How well the Dissenters cause was managed, I shall have occasion to remark presently. Mr. Lindsey observes of the established clergy's petition, "Their cause was so well defended in the commons house of parliament by some

Cambridge to have attempted a removal of this grievance. At our sister University no generous effort has been yet made for liberty. Even at matriculation the young men still subscribe to the 39 Articles, and have not the shelter of a *bonâ fide* subscription. ||

THE following very serious reflections are made by Mr. Archdeacon Paley, "Though some purposes of order and tranquillity may be answered by the establishment of creeds and confessions, yet are they at all times attended with very serious consequences. They check inquiry, they violate liberty, they ensnare the clergy, by holding out temptations to prevarication. However they may express the persuasion, or be accommodated to the controversies or the fears of the age, in which they are composed, in process of time, and by reason of the changes, which are wont to take place in the judgement of mankind upon religious subjects, they come at length to contradict the actual judgement of the church, whose doctrines

of its most illustrious members, and so many appeared for it, that though unsuccessful, by the majority of the votes against it, it was truly triumphant." P. 47. There were two assemblies of the clergy, who met for this purpose; one at the Feathers' Tavern, Fleet-street; the other at Tension's library. No less than five of them have since attained episcopal dignity! — Other petitioning clergymen will surely arise, since bishops have set the example.

|| By the Oxford statutes, whoever go to be matriculated, if they have attained their sixteenth year, must subscribe the 39 articles of religion, take the oath of allegiance and supremacy, and of obedience to the university statutes. If within their fifteenth year, and above their twelfth, they must then *only subscribe to the articles*. If they have not passed their twelfth year, they may be matriculated; but when of proper age, must go through all the forms. *Excerpta, e corp. Statut. Univers. Oxon. Tit. 2.*

doctrines they profess to contain, and they perpetuate the proscription of sects and tenets, from which any danger has long ceased to be apprehended."*

THE present inquiry proceeds from a well wisher of mankind. Conscious of no ungenerous motives in undertaking it, but urged by the love of truth, and the strong feelings of benevolence, he makes no apology for the freedom of his remarks. If the establishment of creeds and confessions be connected with the dearest interests of society, with the most sacred engagements of religion, to apologize would be mean, and even impolitic. Professing, as he does, an attachment to truth, and benevolence, if he prove, that Subscription violate both, however imperfect the work, the design, at least, will need no apology. Several very interesting questions may be asked on this subject. I propose four.

I. How far is the establishment of Subscription consistent with the natural rights of mankind?

II. How far is it consistent with the powers of the human mind?

III. How far is it consistent with the principles of the British constitution?

IV. How far is it consistent with the doctrines and precepts of christianity?

I. I ask

* Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy, Cap. 10.
on Religious Establishments.

I. I ASK, how far is the establishment of Subscription consistent with the natural rights of mankind; meaning by natural rights, those, with which I am invested by the Author of my existence.

I NEVER feel myself more disposed to love my fellow creatures, and to hold their just claims sacred, than when I hear this question asked, Have we not all one Father? Great Parent! I immediately say, Should we not all then be united by the tenderest ties, and become mutual guardians of our common privileges. By considering the relation, which all men bear to the common Parent, I immediately see the relation, which subsists among all mankind, as a family. Many scripture reasons might be given to prove, that the authority, exercised by the patriarchs, could be no other than paternal.† In this infant state of society, though each, according to his different talents, would move in different departments, yet there would be no opposition of interests, no exclusive privileges enjoyed, no invidious distinctions kept up. In proportion to the smallness of these societies, and the narrowness of their territories, the paternal spirit would exert itself in all its simplicity and glory. Primitive societies would naturally put this question, Are we not all brethren?

In process of time, as the family multiplied, the boundaries of their habitation would be necessarily enlarged. What then? Travel which way they would, East, West,

† Sydney's Discourses on Government, B. I. c. 8. Locke on Government. B. I. C. 2. C. 6. 10.

West, North, or South, had they not all one Father? Each had to other the same relation, all were in possession of certain original rights, of which no one could justly deprive them, the rights of men.

I OBSERVE further, that as the wants of mankind are the foundation of society, and society gives birth to government, government is dictated by nature. And that as the power of individuals would form a political state, comprehending the union of several families, so far as these political unions were conformable to nature, they became the guardians of those rights.†

Is it asked, what those rights are? Survey the soil where you received your origin. On that soil grow your rights. Are you born among the American tribes? Strangers to the refinements of literature, and the luxuries of wealth, nature has however furnished you with the means of subsistence, and the materials of happiness. The Great Spirit, you might say, gives no one a right to deprive us of them.

ARE you born among the Gentoos? You might say, The Supreme Being, who is best pleased when his children live in love, and promote good works, gives no one a right to oppress us. The wisdom of Brumma left us good laws, and a pure religion. We all claim justice alike to be administered to us. The wisdom of Brumma made division of our people into four tribes. Let not
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† Montesquieu *Esprit des loix*. Livr. I. C. 1. 2. 3.

one tribe oppresses the other, nor any individual in either encroach on the common privileges. Ye Soubahs, and Nabobs, sons of cruelty and oppression, why have ye levelled cruel taxes, and disordered our government? Why have ye plundered us of our property, beggared our families, and murdered our people?

ARE you natives of China? You might say, We worship, and adore Tien. We love our prince, he is the good father of his people, and we are his children; obedience is his due. Exclude us not from the pleasure of serving him, nor deprive us of the reward. Let us till our lands in peace. Let us enjoy the fruits of our labour without interruption, and without loss. We boast a government, which breaths a spirit of domestic oeconomy. Will you by unnatural encroachments destroy the harmony of our family?

IF I live in a state, the character of which is commercial, like that of Holland, I have a right to all the advantages of commerce; if under the government of a mixt monarchy, like that of Britain, I have a natural right to partake, according to my rank and abilities, of all the advantages, preferments, and rewards, inseparable from that form of government.

YES! if I were born under a government, favoured with the peculiar smiles of heaven; where the arts and sciences flourish; where commerce and agriculture have attained a high degree of improvement; where a wise and free polity is administered; where morality and religion rest on the surest basis; where all the elegancies
and

and refinements of life abound, where every thing, that can ennoble the mind, humanize the heart, enrich a state, find a friendly soil, and, at some future period, may perhaps gain perfection? My natural rights then grow in Britain: and each individual, according to our different ages, and stations in society, should in justice reap them.

YES! I repeat it again, by the same relation, that I lay claim to the privileges of an Indian, if born among the American tribes, or of a Gentoo, Chinese, or Hollander, if born among them, I am entitled to the advantages of more polished life, if I receive my birth in Britain. We are social beings. All men of virtue, and of influence, have a common right to be considered as the objects of public trust, and employed for the public utility; I say a common right, making however a proper allowance for the different talents of men, and for different departments of office. Each ought to be allowed to educate his children according to their rank: if literary advantages be derived from any national endowment, they should be suffered to flow in bountiful streams to the nation at large; and not be guarded, like pitiful waters, for the exclusive benefit of a few. Are we rational beings, capable of thought, and reflection? We have a right to the free exercise of our reason; to embrace any speculative opinions on the vast variety of moral and literary subjects. Are we able to express our thoughts by words, and our words by signs, or letters? We should have the liberty of speaking our sentiments, and of publishing them to the world. There is a Being who created us; he has commanded us to worship him. He has made

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a revelation of his will. It becomes the leading duty of life, and one of our most important natural rights, to consult that revelation, and to choose our religion. There should be no impediments to obstruct our choice, nor penalties, after we have made it. *

THESE, and others like them, I call natural rights; which should be as free as the air, that we breath, or the light, which enlivens creation, the gift of heaven. They are claims, arising out of our present situation, our mutual relation, and our common equality. They are therefore just claims. Whoever attempts to violate them encroaches on the common privileges, and supports the cause of tyranny: no consideration being a sufficient plea for an exclusive enjoyment, but such conduct, as injures government, disorders society, or such circumstances, as carry with them the most undeniable evidence of natural incapacity in the excluded party.

A FREE state, as a good political writer remarks, at the same time it is free itself, makes all its members free, by excluding licentiousness, and guarding their persons and names against insult. It is the end of all just government, at the same time it secures the liberty of the public against foreign injury, to secure the liberty of individuals

† Gradus autem plures sunt societates hominum: ut enim ab infinita illa discedatur, proprior est ejusdem gentis nationis, linguæ, qua maxime homines conjunguntur. Multa enim sunt civibus inter se communia, forum, fana, porticus, viæ, leges, jura, judicia, suffragia, consuetudines præterea et familiaritates, multisque cum multis res rationesque contractæ. Cicero de officiis. L. I. 17.

his res

interius etiam est ejusdem civitatis.

dividuals against private injury. I do not therefore think it strictly just, to say, it belongs to the nature of government to encroach on private liberty. It ought never to do this, except so far as the exercise of private liberty encroaches on the liberty of others; that is, it is licentiousness it restrains, and liberty only, when it destroys liberty."† A just government, therefore, by forming a barrier against tyranny, preserves sacred those valuable rights before-mentioned. But does not the establishment of test laws, and Subscription violate them all? no

It is well known, that places of public trust, extensive influence, and general utility are shut against many persons in England by a sacramental test. Catholics, Protestant Dissenters, Jews and Deists, are all affected by it: among whom will be found men, who in point of virtue, honour, and political principle, are of equal consideration with churchmen. But the doors, by which they should enter to the enjoyment of their natural rights, are, I say, shut against them by religious tests, improperly so called, the ne plus ultra to many a brave man. The test act was originally directed against Catholics, who, at the time, were said to be incapable of giving security to government, but was applied too successfully to men, who most conscientiously could. The people to whom I allude, were neither savages, idolaters, outlaws, nor aliens; but men, whose origin is as respectable, whose complexion as fair, whose abilities as distinguished, whose religion as pure, whose pretensions in every respect as just, as those of the reigning party. The test laws affect all

† Price on Civil Liberty. P. I. Sect. 2.

all parties in England; and in the latter instance, violate the rights of those, who by the ties of nature, the bonds of society, and the engagements of religion, are our brethren, in the most respectable sense our equals. They are Men, Christians, Britons, and Protestants. Now as every Subscription is a test, so is every test a virtual Subscription. A compliance with this requisition admits a man into those places of trust, influence, and advantage, to which he had a previous title. The test therefore does but admit him to his just rank, while a non-compliance is a disqualification, and thrusts him down. And what does it argue, whether I be a pupil of Spinoza, or a disciple of Jesus? Whether I embrace the creed of Arius, of Athanasius, or of Socinus? *Homo sum et civis*. A test, which admits me to the enjoyment of a natural or civil right, does in fact deprive me of them. Indeed the law of exclusion not only injures those, to whom it denies its protection, but those also, whom it receives to its favour. ‡

BUT

‡ The corporation and test acts were both passed in Charles the 2ds. reign: the former in 1661; the latter received the royal assent March 9, 1673. Both were originally aimed against the Roman Catholics, though afterwards applied to protestant dissenters. Vid. a Sermon on Sacramental Tests, preached at Cambridge by Mr. Robinson, at a meeting of the dissenting congregations in Cambridgeshire. Since this part of my subject was finished, a work has been published, entitled the Right of the Dissenters to a complete Toleration, by a Layman, a performance, which deserves the serious attention of the legislature: wherein not only an accurate history of the Sacramental Test is given, but its injustice, inexpediency, and impolicy are fully shewn.

BUT Subscription is the subject of the present inquiry. And here what ample materials are afforded for discussion! Was it natural in the men, who in the 16th. century receded from the slavery of popery, to subject their schools and universities to confessions of faith and church discipline? Whether the policy were agreeable to nature, or no, such was the practice of all the Protestant churches in France, who reformed themselves after the Platform of Geneva.* Does not England too expose herself to censure from this quarter?

IT is well known, that the liberty of educating youth in England was in the year 1603 confined to persons of a particular description; and further, that those people, who, by not subscribing to all the 39 articles, were excluded from the benefit of national endowments, were deprived of teachers of their own persuasion, till authorized by Subscription to part of those articles. This grievance also lay on all dissenting ministers. It is now in part removed; but in part still remains. However, thanks to the mildness of the present times, many practice by connivance, what still wants the sanction of legal authority. For as the laws of religion frequently remove the inconveniencies of political constitutions, † so does the natural justice of man, not uncommonly, correct the injustice of particular laws. I myself have never been licensed either to preach, or teach youth; (nor do I mean ever to be) yet I have continued to do both without interruption, almost ever since I left college. Now if the
education

* Quick's Synodicon. V. II. C. 2.

† Montesquieu De l'Esprit des Loix. Tom. II. Livr. 24. C. 16.

education of our youth be a natural right, ought not men to be left in the free possession of it? Should not parents be suffered to choose tutors for their children without restraint, and tutors be left to the province of education, without subscribing to articles; without subscribing even to the Scriptures themselves? A natural right is common to all. Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Catholic, Deist, and Jew, have all an equal claim. Does not subscription to any thing, as a license to teach youth imply the contrary? natural and civil rights stand independent of religion.

BUT if the principles, laid down be true, I shall not be satisfied with the question, Whether men should not be left at perfect liberty in the education of their children, without the shadow of a Subscription, or of a fine? But I shall be inclined still further to ask, Should not public endowments, like our Universities, be considered as public benefits? Should not royal establishments comport with the magnificence of princes, who ought to be fathers of their people, not heads of a party? Should not Dissenters of every denomination be entitled to the advantages of our Universities, as well as the most zealous sons of the church? And entitled to them without a religious test? For if a religious test admit men to the enjoyment of a natural right, does it not in fact deprive them of it?

AND if the principles laid down be true, I am very far from thinking, that Catholics, protestant Dissenters, Jews, and Deists are the only men, injured by Subscription. I must beg leave to ask another question; Does

it

it not also injure those, who call themselves the church? We have already remarked, that at Oxford, no youth can be matriculated without subscribing to the 39 articles; and that even at Cambridge, none are admitted to their first degree without a bona fide Subscription.† All our degrees in Arts, Law, Physic, Music, and Divinity are guarded by Subscription. If I have made a fair statement of natural rights, it will follow, that such demands are impositions, irreconcilable with the claims of general liberty, and should be considered by the members of our learned seminaries a severe oppression. A literary qualification being supposed, should they not be admitted to their respective emoluments and employments without a religious test. For what does a religious test do for them? It gives them a power of entering on a possession, where they had a right to enter before: making that a matter of reward, which is a matter of justice.

OUR

† “To be a member of any church, says Mr. Frend, a man must necessarily assent to the principles of union, laid down by the society, which compose it.” Now as the principles are established by Law, and are made up of doctrines, and discipline, Mr. Frend rightly concludes, that a person cannot be bona fide a member of the church, unless he believe the doctrines, and practice the discipline. Vid. Frend on Subscription, P. 8. Thus in the famous case of Mr. Evans, who, as a bar to his being Sheriff, pleaded, that he could not qualify being a Dissenter, Lord Mansfield enumerating what constituted a person bona fide a Dissenter, related those particulars, which properly distinguish a person, as a member of a dissenting Church. Vid. Lord Mansfield’s speech at the end of Furneaux’s Letters to Judge Blackstone.

OUR common notion of liberty, Mr. Sidney somewhere remarks, is not from books, but from nature. My definition of natural rights I have therefore not taken from books; and I am aware, that it will not be reckoned accurate: political writers understanding by natural rights, those, which men possess, before they enter into a state of society. The distinction is certainly accurate. Yet I feel no inclination to correct myself. For though I deny not, that, what I call natural rights, belong to men in a state of nature; that some are resigned, when they advance to civil society; and that, strictly speaking, social rights are latter claims, acquired by the relations, into which they at that time enter: yet, I think, that it deserves to be noted, that social or civil have a perfect analogy with natural or absolute rights. The portion of liberty, given up in society, for the public security, forms government, which, while it corrects the wantonness of natural liberty, should always be the guardian of those privileges, which men receive, by uniting in civil society. Whatever degree of liberty be resigned, they resign in common, and whatever benefits be enjoyed, should be enjoyed in common. While men, prior to any civil union, live at large, they are in a state of equality: but as soon as they unite, that equality ceases. Yet all just laws, by protecting them in their proper claims, and serving the public interest, tend in some measure to restore it. So far as laws have not this tendency, but ordain exclusive privileges, except under the circumstances before mentioned, oppression is established, and some individuals must be injured.

A RELATION

A RELATION of particulars will perhaps place this subject in a proper point of view. There are many Catholics, natural born subjects of Britain. The voice of justice says, that they are entitled to the privileges of citizens. But their religious profession exposes them to harsh penalties, and excludes them from civil employments. From our Universities too they are excluded by ecclesiastical restrictions. In vindication of these restraints, it has been said, that they hold a disaffection to government, which seeks its destruction: maintaining, that no faith may be kept with heretics: that princes, excommunicated by the sovereign Pontiff, may be dethroned; that dominion is founded in grace; and, that they are in the interest of a foreign Pretender. Some years ago, the fears, to which such principles would give birth, were not groundless. But in regard to the Catholics of modern times, residing in Britain, they have it in their power to say,

Tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis.

They will tell you, that in this whole system of fear there is something ideal; that the arguments, which support it, are derived from the maxims of more remote periods, and from educational prejudices, not from modern facts, and real life. It wants proof, they say, that modern Catholics believe, that the Pope has a right to supremacy in all christian countries; and, that the church may dethrone monarchs. This power was indeed challenged by several Pontiffs; but by most liberal Catholics is considered as an obsolete claim. Those who re-

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side in this nation have given many proofs of loyalty. As to their attachment to a foreign prince, this should by no means be considered as peculiar to a Catholic; James II. and his descendants were Catholics, but Jacobitism was never a sentiment, peculiar to popery; many Protestants have held it; many Catholics never did. But it is really time to give over fears from this quarter. When the Pretender was living, and his expectations rather sanguine, how few partizans he had, may be recollected by what happened in the year 1745. From that time they have considerably decreased, and Catholics now make as good British subjects as Protestants.* And, even if considerations of political necessity might operate to exclude them from offices of civil trust, the same would not apply to academical institutions.

To these we join "a philosophic sect;"† I mean the people, whose principles will not allow them to bear arms, to take oaths, or to pay tythes. Like the former, they are Men, Britons, and Christians. But in regard to their political principles, the case is by no means parallel. The Quakers (as these people have been called) were never disaffected to the British government; they never professed allegiance to a foreign prince. Not allowing themselves to administer an oath, they are necessarily debarred some offices of magistracy. Equally averse to bearing arms, they are of course incapable

* Vid. Miscellaneous Tracts by Mr. Arthur O'Leary. Loyalty asserted, and the New Test Oath vindicated.

The Catholic Dissenters have very lately stated their Case, and presented a Petition to the House of Commons, 1789. What I have said above, is confirmed by those papers.

† So Voltaire calls the Quakers.

pable of military distinctions. But this incapacity is of their own creating. Government need not exclude, but ought still to protect them; having found in their religious principles all that security, which it can reasonably desire. Thus writes their famous Apologist in his address to Charles II. "In England there is scarce a prison, that has not been filled with our people, nor a judge, before whom we have not been haled. Yet in all the plots contrived against thee, since thy return into Britain, there was never any owned of that people, found or known to be guilty, but always were found innocent and harmless, not coveting after, nor contending for the kingdoms of this world, and yet subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake."† He could have added, we abhor oaths; but we do homage to truth. We attend to no ceremonies; but we practice virtue. We are in want of no priests; but we listen to the voice of instruction. Excellent men! Yet ye cannot be admitted into our Universities. Bonâ fide ye are not of the church.

IN respect of the other sects, what is true of the Quakers, with some allowances, will also be found true of them. In their religious sentiments they vary; and most of them, different in this respect from the Quakers, hold the right of resistance. But there are some principles, in which they all agree, favourable to civil government, and characteristic of the British Constitution. *
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† Vid. Mr. Barclay's Apology for the Quakers. The Address to the King. See also Proposition XIV.

* Vid. a Political Catechism by Mr. Robinson of Cambridge. This book contains the genuine political principles of protestant Dissenters.

Their public conduct has been consistent with their principles; and to the truth of this assertion, the House of Commons, on a very memorable occasion, bore an upright testimony.

THE Baptists have been represented as the most violent and ungovernable of mankind: and many of our college statutes, as well as our church canons, guard expressly against them. The "anabaptistical errors," indeed, have been cried down all over Europe: and yet, by those who are best capable of speaking on this subject, it is affirmed, to be no easy matter to ascertain, what these "anabaptistical errors" have been: the Baptists, of all sects in christendom, having professed the greatest diversity of political, as well as of religious sentiments. This is particularly true of the German Baptists. When therefore Bishop Warburton says, the "German Anabaptist, who holds capital punishment to be sinful, ought to be debarred some offices of magistracy,"* he says just nothing: for he, who holds this sentiment, would necessarily exclude himself from those offices, which could not be administered without inflicting death. And if a few German Baptists held this sentiment, would it follow, that the "German Anabaptist" in general did? Not however to dispute this, what shall we say of the English Baptist, who holds no such sentiment? Must we exclude him too from offices of magistracy, and our seats of literature? † Upon
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* Alliance between Church and State. L. III. P. 214.

† The Baptists have been an injured people. In our college Statutes "Libertines and Anabaptists" are reckoned as one; Stat. Reginal. Coll. 20. De hæresibus non defendendis.

an impartial inquiry it will be found, that two of the grand, "anabaptistical errors," in England have been those very sentiments, which have rendered Milton, Sydney, Montesquieu, and Locke famous through Europe. To the principles of our Constitution they have ever felt a zealous attachment. Their learned advocate thus pleads their cause. She is sensible (he is speaking of Queen Anne.) "That we are as hearty as any of her subjects, and as ready, with the utmost hazard of our lives and fortunes, to support the crown and dignity she justly enjoys, and so highly adorns. And if I know the Antipædobaptists, as I think I do, I speak from my conscience, and in God's presence, I am satisfy'd, there are not truer friends to the government, that will do more for it according to their abilities, in the three kingdoms." † Like the Quakers, the Baptists are Men, Britons, Christians, and Protestants. But what does alma mater say of Baptists? No entrance for Schismatics: and she turns the keys of the college gates on them.

THUS we treat Schismatics. What shall we say to Heretics? I mean to Arians, and Socinians. We do not, they say, admit that Jesus Christ is the supreme God. We cannot grant, that in the unity of the Godhead there be three persons of one substance. But we honour government. We are thankful for the gift of reason.

dendis: and at a time when an act of indemnity passed, state criminals and Anabaptists have been excepted. Burnets Hist. of the Reformation. This sect disavow, the name Anabaptist, and call themselves Baptists.

† Dr. Gale's Reflections on Wall's History of Infant Baptism, Letter I. P. 9.

reason. We revere the sacred scriptures. We hold the rights of all mankind sacred. Lardner and Leland, Emlyn and Taylor would not subscribe to the 39 articles. They were Heretics. What does alma mater say of Newton, Locke, and Whiston? Yet deny it who will, they were all Heretics. In the early part of life they subscribed to the 39 articles. But would they have done it at the close? They disbelieved our doctrinal articles. Having reflected such honour on our Universities, ought they to have been refused its privileges? What strange words would these have appeared, when uttered by alma mater against these oracles of learning! Bonâ fide ye are not of the church: rebels and Heretics, ye are disaffected to "King James's three darling articles."* That truly upright and apostolical man, Mr. Whiston, did, however, receive this treatment.

It will, perhaps, appear an affected catholicism, to place Jews and Deists on the same seat with orthodox Christians. Let it appear so. I smiled, on reading some years ago an article in one of the London papers, which respected the admission of Jews to the freedom of the city of London. The Recorder gave his opinion to a case, laid before him by Mr. Solicitor, that a Jew renouncing judaism, and being baptized according to the rites and forms of the church, should be admitted to the freedom

* One objection, it seems, brought against Dr. Edwards's Grace was, that the Unitarians were supposed to be its patrons. Vid. Friend on Subscription, P. 22. Were those who started this objection aware of the honour, which they did the Unitarians? Are Unitarians the only men at Cambridge, who dare to plead the cause of mankind?

freedom of the city. To admit a Jew to the freedom of a city, in which he resided, was agreeable to natural justice. But why was baptism to be urged as a plea? The voice of justice speaks, hear, all ye inhabitants of the world! Ye disciples of Brumma, of Mahommed, of Moses, and of Jesus. In whatever country ye are born, whatever ceremonies ye practice, into whatever doctrine ye are instructed, the law of nature is one, the rights of nature are invariable. The laws of baptism, and of circumcision give no title, and offer no bar, to my impartial regard. Let me hold the scale, and remove rogues and fools, and all men weigh alike.

I AFFIRM, and feel indignation, that the Jews have been cruelly treated by christian states. † Three hundred and four years they were banished from England; but were at length recalled by Oliver Cromwell. ‡ The forefathers of the present generation were consequently aliens, and received into this country, as foreigners. But ought not our modern Jews to be treated as the natural born subjects of Britain? Are they not men? Are they not our brethren? And, living with us in a state of civil society, are they not entitled to the common privileges of citizens? They will be found, perhaps, equally qualified with the most devout christians, to preside in a corporation, to represent a borough, and to dispute in the schools. If the principles laid down be true, have they not as just a title? *

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† Hume's Hist of England. V. II. P. 3. 4. 202. 231. 239. 240.

‡ Stow's Survey of London. L. III. P. 54.

* Lady Montague, when at Adrianople remarks, that she

SHOULD Jews then be admitted to our Universities? I see no reason for excluding them. Are these good arguments in support of our exclusive privilege? The sons of Israel killed Jesus. The justice of heaven is pursuing their children. They are banished from their beloved Canaan. They reject the christian doctrine. Let all this be granted. What then? The Jews viewed Jesus as an impostor: and nailed him to a cross: but the Jews are men. "That Christ should have been God before the world, and that he should submit to be made a man has appeared to their posterity not only impossible, but even absurd." * Yet the Jews are men. The Jews are circumcised. But the Jews are men, and equally capable, as Christians, of understanding this maxim, "What ye would, that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them." Some years ago two eminent Jews resided in a university town, and it is still reckoned no disgrace, to read the Hebrew grammar of the father, and the book of Fluxions of the son. But, ye sons of the circumcised! Ye could not subscribe James's three darling articles.

AND why should Deists, living among Christians, be treated like inhabitants of another world? The author of nature endues them with reason, and presents them with revelation: and to him they are accountable for the use of both. A citizen of Geneva † loved the morality

the Jews have privileges above the natural Turks themselves, and have formed a very considerable common wealth, being judged by their own laws. V. I. P. 200.

* Justin. Martyr. Dial. cum Tryphon. Jud. P. 266. Edit. Lut.

† Rousseau's Emilius and Sophia. Vol. II. The Profession of a Savoyard Curate.

morality of Jesus, but held doubts concerning the christian doctrines. Perhaps he did not understand them. Popery he imagined, that he understood, thinking, "that it only related to gutling." He was exercised with perpetual suspicions: he thought every christian his enemy: but, at length, found a peaceful asylum from the persecutions of bigots. Why do we throw impediments in the way of Deists? Those impediments will but increase their power, and even give them a licence, to do mischief. Is a Deist a member of civil society, a man of humane sentiments, and a lover of the polite arts? Why then should we refuse him a place at our Universities, though not choosing to attend our chapels, or subscribe to our articles?

BUT I ask again, Are not even the members of the established church injured by Subscription? If I have made a fair statement of natural rights, nobody, I think, will be disposed to dispute the justice of their claim; though many will scruple to allow them any prior or exclusive title; for, that would destroy the notion of a birthright; a natural, or birthright, being a common right. However, the people, of whom I speak, have this to say, They were born within the bosom of the church, nourished at her breasts, and educated under her immediate care. Their parents, their tutors, their friends, were all her dutiful sons, nor have their affections, so far as we know, been alienated from her interest. They tell us, that they were baptized, and have been confirmed into her doctrine; that they have continued to repeat her ca-

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techiſm, and to attend her worſhip. “We beg, ſaid ſome petitioning undergraduates of the Univerſity of Cambridge in 1771, that our Subscription to the articles may be diſpenſed with, not becauſe we object to any of them, but becauſe we have not had an opportunity to ſtudy them.”† If literary advantages be derived at our Univerſities; if the conferring of a degree be the public ſanction to academical merit, a recommendation at the entrance on public life, and an introduction to many of the benefits of civil ſociety, why ſhould they not be ſuffered to enjoy them, without being perplexed with Subscription? Why not be allowed, in proportion to their merit, and according to their reſpective claims, to advance in order to every academical privilege? In many caſes, they are not clerical men, and will in future life move in departments, unconnected with theology. Why muſt Subscription give a title to privileges, to which they had a right before?

As the preceding queſtions relate more immediately to Subscription at our Univerſities, I will juſt obſerve, that there are three ſorts of inſtitutions, from which Univerſities appear to differ.

I. **THEY** differ from public ſchools. Public ſchools may be conſidered, as nurseries for our Univerſities, and Univerſities ſhould be the patrons of all public ſchools. Both princes, and private perſons, may certainly diſpoſe of their own property; and from very benevolent conſiderations erect public ſchools, and other eleemoſynary inſtitutions,

† Jebb's Works, Vol. I. P. 208.

institutions, with certain restrictions; like that of Edward the 6th. for orphans, and that of Mr. Sutton for decayed merchants. There may be also just reasons for appropriating some colleges to particular schools; or some peculiar emoluments in a college to persons particularly specified. Thus King's College in Cambridge is confined wholly to the scholars of Eton; and a fellowship was founded in Queen's, with the condition, that the person possessing it, should preach two sermons every year at Over. But a University is a collection of colleges: and, if there be graces or statutes, excluding many persons from all colleges alike, and depriving them of all University expectations, †* will not the case be materially altered? The province of public schools is simply the education of youth, and confines its attention to the rudiments of science. But the views of Universities are far more extensive. Their design is, to lift youth into manhood, to lay open the more abstruse parts of science, to protect the polite arts in general, to promote new discoveries, to improve, enrich, and enlighten a nation at large. While therefore public schools rise out of small beginnings, and will bear but a slight superstructure, Universities are founded originally, as it were, on a broad basis. Should they not then be built of solid materials, display a princely munificence, invite and even allure all, discountenance none, and so be directed to the public utility? Let such institutions resemble the wide sea, into which all neighbouring rivers flow. *Mare fit liberum.*

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† Excerpta e Corp. Stat. Univers. Oxon. Tit. II.

* Excerpta e Stat. Acad. Cantab. Senatus Decreta de Oppugnatoribus Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ.

II. UNIVERSITIES should be distinguished from ecclesiastical corporations. They are now allowed to be civil corporations. || Let the church, while it retain its present form, be subject to ecclesiastical restraints. Let, No entrance for Heretics, be written on the church porch. But should societies, united for civil purposes, be confined by ecclesiastical ordinances? We may as well force trade and theology under the same yoke, as literature and theology. And if some literary institutions are thus limited, Why not all? The Royal Society was founded for the advancement of natural knowledge; the Antiquarian for the elucidation of antiquities; the College of Physicians, for the encouragement of physic. But would it not be amusing, to have none admitted members, or to enjoy the benefit of those institutions, but subscribers of 39 old fashioned articles? No greater propriety is there, in a University's requiring such a test. As the former corporations should be accessible to members of the same political community, so also should the latter.

III. THE pursuits of literature differ also from the concerns of civil government. There are certain principles, essential to the support of a good government; and all engaging in its service, ought undoubtedly to possess them. Otherwise, the very men, whose duty it becomes to protect it, and to administer to its wants, would direct all their influence to subvert it. It would certainly be impolitic in the king of Great Britain, to advance men to his Privy Council, or in a corporation to choose a Mayor, or in a borough a Representative, who would defeat

feat the very end of their appointment. Yet, whenever it shall clearly appear, that the political sentiments of a people have been misrepresented, as in the case of the protestant Dissenters, or, that if they once held maxims, destructive to a particular state, they have since relinquished them, as the Catholics, the way to civil employment should immediately be left open. § But the proper design of Universities, is the promotion of literature. It might, therefore, even happen, that men, unqualified for several departments in the state, might, with the greatest safety, be admitted to academical employments. The Quaker, for example, will not bear arms. He unfits himself, therefore, for military honours; his religion not suffering him to receive them. Here government need not interpose. Suppose another to hold, that a foreign power has a right to the crown of England. Here government might justly interfere, for its own safety. The various parties, whom I have introduced, are capable, I am persuaded, of giving the state a proper security: it may therefore safely tolerate their religion, and ought in justice to admit them to those civil employments, which they can conscientiously hold. But, supposing the worst, that they can give the civil magistrate no security: this consideration need not affect Universities. For while the civil magistrate, be the executor of laws, which have a relation to the nature, and principle of our government, † he has a permanent security in his own hands. The disaffection of academics, therefore, could introduce no disorder. Plato's famous remark

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§ Vid. Paley, C. 10. On Religious Establishments.

† Montesquieu. De l' Esprit des Lois. Tom. I. Livr. II, III.

will not only apply to his ideal republic; it is applicable to every good government in the world: "Nothing should be appropriated to individuals further, than the public necessity requires."* Plato indeed directs the remark to private property, where the application of it will be liable to innumerable objections; but when applied to the common privileges of citizens, it may be received as a general maxim.

THE more seriously then I consider the origin of those rights, which are incident to our nature, the proper end of civil society, and the liberal spirit, which, in conformity to that end, should pervade a University, and the more dispassionately I propose the question, How far is the establishment of creeds at our Universities consistent with the just pretensions of our nature, the more clearly I perceive on which side the answer must fall.

I MUST call it an infringement of our just rights: and at Cambridge, I would remark, that it took its rise from a quarter, which makes it look with an unfavourable aspect. James the first was an enemy to political and religious liberty. Natural liberty too was severely taxed by his arbitrary hand. According to him "A king was God's vicegerent; monarchy was a partaker of the unity, an imitation of the Deity; a king at his coronation became by natural right the father of his subjects; and man had no rights, till he received them from royal hands. He was to obey the just commands of majesty with alacrity; but against those which were unjust, he had no resource,

* Πρωτον μιν εστιαν κεκλημενων εδεμιαν μηδενα ιδεαν, ην μη πασα αναγκη. Plato de Repub. Lib. III.

resource, but tears, and sighs, and prayers, according to an adage of the primitive church, when under oppression, Prayers, and tears are the arms of the church."§ These are his majesty's words. Agreeably to these principles, James treated his subjects. Sometimes they are his poor slaves, and sometimes his little school-boys; while he himself is the absolute monarch, or the school-master of his realms. It was but in the last century, that the University of Cambridge imposed subscription on taking degrees; † when a grace was passed at the command of that simple monarch, a man, whom unflattering posterity have long stripped of his glorious title, Solomon, and formed one more suited to his character, James the Tyrant; and a man, who could give his son, Charles such advice as this, when speaking of a large body of men, most justly deserves it. "Do not suffer these men, said he, if you resolve to live in peace, to enjoy the same country with yourself, unless for the sake of trying your patience, as Socrates did his wife." *

It is not foreign to this Inquiry to ask, Shall we hold graces sacred, which were passed to humour the private piques, and interested views of a pedantic tyrant? We had natural rights before James the first left Scotland; and why have they not been restored to us, since his family have left England?

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§ Stat. Acad. Cantab. Literæ Regiæ. P. 276.

† Preces et lachrymæ sunt arma ecclesiæ. Vid. Jacobi Opera. Jus liberæ Monarchiæ.

‡ Nec patere, si pacate vivere decreveris, ut hi eadem tecum patria fruantur, nisi forte experientiae ergo, ut Socrates vixit cum Xantippe. Vid. Jacobi opera. Δωρον Βασίλει.

I MAKE no remarks on the inconvenience felt by theological inquirers, when attached to established systems; the awkwardness with which a young mathematician, unpracticed in Divinity, surveys 39 articles; the little connection between the *materia medica*, and church discipline; or the relation of crotchets and quavers to the five points.† Some shrewd questions have, however, been frequently asked on these subjects. But this Inquiry leads me to put a plain one: Why is such a yoke, originally imposed by such a man, as James the first, still submitted to by a learned body? Is not Subscription on such

|| When I speak all along of subscribing to the 39 Articles, let it be observed, that the three darling articles of James, which are subscribed to at Cambridge include them all.

I. That the King's Majesty, under God, is the only supreme governor of the realm, and all other his Highness's dominions and countries, as well in spiritual, or ecclesiastical things or causes, as temporal, and that no foreign prince, person, prelate, or potentate hath, or ought to have, any jurisdiction, ecclesiastical or spiritual, within his majesty's said realms, dominions, and countries.

II. That the Book of Common Prayer, and of ordering of bishops, priests, and deacons. containeth nothing in it contrary to the word of God; and that it may lawfully be used; and that he himself will use the form in the said book prescribed in public prayer, and administration of the Sacraments, and no other.

III. That he alloweth the book of articles, agreed upon by the archbishops, and bishops of both provinces, and the whole clergy in the convocation, holden at London in the year 1562; and that he acknowledgeth all, and every the articles therein contained (being in number 39, besides the ratification) to be agreeable to the word of God.

We whose names are underwritten do willingly, and ex animo subscribe to the three articles before mentioned, and to all things in them contained, Excerpt. e Stat. Acad. Cantab, P, 25.

such terms an invasion of a natural right? It argues nothing, whether I be a disciple of Boerhaave, of Coke, or of Handel; whether I resign myself to mathematical investigation, or metaphysical refinements. To admit men to public encouragement on such terms, is, indeed, *Δωρον αδωρον* to deprive those of it, who will not subscribe, is to debar them the rights of men, and of citizens. Why are our natural rights invaded?

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

SOME, I know, will object, that these rights are imaginary; that, all we can claim of civil society, as a matter of right, is protection; that every thing beyond is to be received as a reward.† I have already provided against this objection; but will just add, that “every good citizen is capable of reward”: and, that it is repugnant to natural justice, to disqualify any individual, of that character, for receiving it. Those states were always held in admiration by the sages of antiquity, in which public encouragement was wont to be impartially bestowed on the useful virtues.‡ As to those who acknowledge, that the rights here asserted are not imaginary; but who notwithstanding think, that some just sentiments, may yet be too refined for the present state of society, they will recollect the saying of an elegant philosopher; “There are certain speculative truths in politics, which the world is not yet old enough to have the knowlege of.”* It is to be lamented, that one, so consistent with natural justice, and so connected with public happiness, should have

† Warburton's Alliance. L. II. C. 3.

‡ Ἀλλὰ γὰρ οἱ κέλαι ἀρίστης μεγίστα, τοῖς δὲ καὶ ἀνδρες ἀριστοὶ πολιτεύουσι. Thucydides in Epitaphio.

* Hume's Essays, Vol. I. Es. II. On Civil Government.

have been thought of this kind, in so enlightened a country, as Britain. Some states have here had the start of us. As we grow older, we too shall grow wiser.

BUT it is also said, that society must submit to prudent restraints, and political regulations; that a subordination in government must be steadily maintained; and, consequently, that a state should have a just and permanent security. This will be granted. But I cannot admit, that swearing to the truth of the 39 Articles, is either a natural, a just, or a permanent security. Let a state make its own laws; let laws, and not men, govern; let government be made its own security, by becoming the guardian of the social compact;* by presenting, with an unsuspicious hand, its just privileges to the whole society; in a word, to accommodate the maxim of Plato to our present subject, Let no exclusive privileges be enjoyed further, than the public necessity requires; let this, I say, be done, and it will be found a general truth, that the safety of a State, and the prosperity of a University, have no dependance on religious tests.

As to civil government, I have acknowledged, that those, who engage in its service, should be capable of giving

* Some excellent political writers have refined too much, (it has been said) on this "compact." However, all government ought to be regulated by such principles, as a mutual consent would certainly establish. Mr. Locke has given several examples of people, who set up a government over themselves by their own consent. On Government, Book, II. Chap. VIII. and justly observes, that "this, and this only did, or could give beginning to any lawful government in the world." The English government was thus settled at the Revolution,

giving a civil test for further security ; and this will supercede a religious test. Societies, united for the advancement of literature, require none, either religious or civil. If any be necessary, it should, in fact, be of a literary nature, like that over Plato's school.* "Let nobody enter, who does not understand geometry." When I think over the evil of religious tests, I feel horror ! When oaths are taken to serve a present interest, and falsehood receives the compliment of truth, our natural sentiments must be opposed, and we shall discover we have been doing wrong. What will be the consequence ? The most sacred engagements lose their force. We may, indeed, have subscribed, and ratified our Subscription by an oath. But beginning to perceive, that Subscription was an imposition, our oath will pass for a matter of form, a trick of priestcraft, a political manoeuvre, a bugbear, a nothing. We break our shackles, and we are free.

WHAT the incomparable Beccaria says of oaths, "administered to a criminal, to force him to speak the truth," will apply to oaths, which allure people to profess falsehood. "Such laws are like a dike, opposed directly to the course of a torrent: it is either immediately overwhelmed, or by a whirlpool, formed by itself, it is gradually undermined and destroyed.†" But a civil test, where necessary, has nothing unnatural in it. It will be given without fear, and may be relied on without hazard. But even here let us be sparing of oaths. Voltaire remarks of the celebrated Patriot, who planted
 Pennsylvania,

* ΟΥΔΕΙΣ ΑΓΕΩΜΕΤΡΗΤΟΣ ΕΙΣΙΤΩ.

† Essay on Crimes and Punishments, Chap. XVIII.

Pensylvania, that "his first care was to make an alliance with his American neighbours; and this is the only treaty, continues he, between those people, and the Christians, that was not ratified by an oath, and was never infringed.¶" I am also persuaded, that there are no sincerer friends to government; none more ready to give every proper security for its support; none who experience a warmer attachment to polite literature; none who feel themselves more interested to promote the true honour of our Universities, than those, who wish to have Subscription abolished. ‡

BUT it will be further objected, that a University is a corporation, and of course invested with certain rights and capacities, necessarily and inseparably incident to every corporation; that with these natural rights have no connection; and that the power of a corporate society to make terms of admission is indisputable, by virtue of its power to make bye laws for its government.

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¶ Voltaire's Works. Vol. XVII. History of the Quakers.

‡ Jebb's Works passim, and Friend's Thoughts on Subscription.

Of the Dissenters I would just observe, that in the year 1772, when the bill was brought into the House of Commons, for their relief, it passed without a division: though afterwards rejected in the upper House. Many just and liberal sentiments were delivered by the Commons, in favour of the claim; they maintained "that the English history abounded with examples, which shew them to have been excellent citizens; and to have been as loyal, and dutiful under good kings, as they were firm in their opposition to those tyrants, who wanted to overturn the constitution," Annual Register, Vol. XV. Chap. 8. P. 96.

I HAVE already remarked from Blackstone, that our Universities are not ecclesiastical, but civil corporations, and that the right of visitation does not arise from any principle of the canon law, but was of necessity created by the common law.* It is granted, that a University may, as well as other corporations, make bye laws, but they should not be repugnant to the spirit of the common law, and to the nature and principle of our government. Bye laws of any particular community are to be measured by the law of the land, in the same manner, as human appointments should be conformable to the law of nature, the principle of every particular government, † and the positive laws of scripture. § Now in every instance, wherein the canons of the church, or the statutes of our Universities, invade the rights of mankind, they oppose the design of the common law, which is to guard them.

A THEOLOGIAN will be ready to object, that it is necessary to guard and secure the true faith. And can there, he will say, be a more probable way of gaining it respect, and ensuring its success, than to force it, as it were, gently on the public notice? To make it the interest of men to receive it, and a disadvantage to reject it? If natural, or social rights are in a small degree encroached on, and some individuals become sufferers, may not the benefit of society at large, involved in the interest of truth, demand such a sacrifice? Will not the importance of

* Blackstone's Commentaries. Vol. I. Chap. 18.

† Montesquieu. De l'Esprit des Lois. Tom. I, Livr. II. III.

§ Hooker's Eccles. Pol. Book III. 9.

of Christianity justify the suppression of heresy? Is not more gained on the side of religion, than is lost on that of liberty? And what serious man will grieve to see the standard of orthodoxy placed in an inviting situation?

ALAS! Ye learned doctors,† I tremble for divinity! This extreme necessity of guarding the faith, this prudential mode of propagating truth, create in my mind some unlucky suspicions. What kind of faith must that be, which wants so much guarding? And can truth be propagated by other means, than information and evidence? Father Fulgentio was once preaching on Pilate's question, "What is truth!" He told his hearers, "that, after many searches, he had found it:" and held out a new Testament. He then put it in his pocket with this cold remark — "But the book is prohibited."‖ The Japonese, and the inhabitants of Siam will not dispute about religion. Do not they act more rationally than some Christians? We dispute, indeed, but we must draw no conclusions. The true faith must be "secured." †

When Dr. Rutherford was regius professor of divinity in the University of Cambridge, Mr. Tyrwhitt of Jesus College, proposed four questions for discussion in the divinity school. The grave professor was much alarmed, and actually refused to let the questions have a public hearing.* Whence did this proceed? Doubtless, the doctor thought himself, in the divinity school, one of those superintendants and governors, who to use his
own

† Rutherford and Waterland.

‖ Jebb's Works. Vol. I. P. 31. Notes,

* Robinson's Arcana. Let. III.

own words, "are to secure and promote, as far as they are able, the true faith and doctrines of the Gospel."||

BUT, the question of orthodoxy I leave, for the present, in the hands of divines; just hinting what I have sometimes heard whispered. It argues little, what you propose to men; whether the Koran, the Shaster, or the Gospel. Is it necessary for the establishing of your scheme, to deprive men of any of the benefits of civil society? We will undertake to prove, that your dogmas cannot be true, nor come from the common parent. This I think justly said. For as there is a primitive reason, † from whence proceed those relations, which constitute law; there are also rights, prior to any form of religion, which are the foundation of liberty. Christianity, we might say, does not violate them; and this is one argument in favour of that religion: but, as some called Christians do, whatever we think of Christianity at large, we draw conclusions against their systems.

BUT, it seems, Dissenters of all denominations would flock to alma mater, if we removed Subscription. This is what I contend ought to be: and this it seems, is, with some, the grand objection.‡ Pitiful and ill-judged policy! Characteristic of priests and monks, not of men of the world. From the time of King James, Non-conformists have been treated in England, as the Lydians were by Cyrus. Herodotus tells us, that the Lydians first turned gold and silver into coin.* With this gold they corrupted the Persians. Cyrus, it is true, aimed

|| Confessional. Pref. to 2nd Edit. P. 33.

† Hooker's Eccles. Pol. B. I. ‡ Friend on Subscription.

* Herodotus. Lib. I.

aimed to humble them, by confining them to servile employments. In like manner, the high-church party thought to sink the consequence of Dissenters, by keeping them ignorant. But Cyrus, and the high-church party were both mistaken. The Lydians corrupted the Persians with their gold; Dissenters too, by being forced into a situation, more favourable to free inquiry, are now taking the lead in literature; and have got possession of those principles of liberty, and civil government, which must, in a revolution of years, undermine the fabric of oppression.

————— Sed Cantaber unde
Stoicus? —————

Nunc totus Græcias nostrasque habet orbis Athenas,
De conducendo loquitur jam rhetore Thule.†

I CANNOT help observing here, that the laws, which relate to education, are also extremely oppressive to catholic Dissenters. I have grieved, that while a legal toleration has afforded some relief to protestant Dissenters, no such relief has yet been afforded to English Catholics. I have grieved, that the laws, which relate to Catholics, should in a free country be directed to perpetuate ignorance on their children. || I have grieved, that our laws,

† I mean not to intimate, that the charge of ignorance, brought against Dissenters, was ever justly founded. Among the ancient Puritans were many as good scholars as England could boast; and when the most circumscribed in regard to literature, they have always had among them many distinguished men.

|| The being debarred our Universities, is a trifle, compared with other acts of injustice, which affect catholic Dissenters

laws should refuse Catholics those privileges, which many Catholic states now allow British Protestants. Yet I have with pleasure seen, that the justice of mankind indulges them in privileges, denied them by the laws. I have also been taught, from the examples of protestant Dissenters, and of Catholics, that Universities are not essential to literature, and that the exertions of industry have a vigour, which will not be borne down by unjust power.

IN answer, however, to this formidable objection, the history of mankind tells us, that while public justice and liberality give health to nations, the hand of oppression is its own destroyer. The Romans were conquerors, and frequently admitted the vanquished to the liberty of their freeborn citizens, and they became one people. † The government of the Chinese provinces, as Baron Montesquieu has also remarked, is equally divided among the Chinese and Tartars. The same œconomy prevails in their courts of justice. This liberality was true policy. It removed suspicion ; it created confidence ; it promoted benevolence. The Tartars thus secured their conquest ; and China, by its very defeat, gained a vast addition of strength.

AND

Dissenters. 23 Eliz. c. 1. 1 Jac. I. c. 4. 3 Jac. I. c. 5. 3 Car. II. c. c. 23 Eliz. c. 1. 3 Jac. I. c. 5. In the 18th year of his present Majesty, one law was repealed, which had precluded them from the enjoyment of landed property, but they are still left by our laws under a cruel proscription in regard to education.

† Livy,

F

AND shall we treat Britons well affected to their excellent constitution, as ALIENS IN THEIR OWN COUNTRY? Christians! Let us not blush to receive some just maxims from pagan heroes. Their prosperity was a comment on their policy. Let us too from more modern examples learn, that an appropriating spirit has an inconceivably bad influence on the interest of civil society. The measures adopted by the English Nonconformists, together with their subsequent fortunes in America, and the conduct of the French Huguenots, who enriched rival nations with their manufactories, while they impoverished their own country, have a warning voice, which says, Injustice is not political wisdom.

THE truth is, that the disorders of individuals will be rectified in a future state. But empires are not immortal. Their fortunes, therefore, are weighed out to them in the present world. The common Father holds the scale of justice with impartial hands, and appoints, that political strength shall depend on political rectitude. In the rise and fall of empires the philosophic eye traces this truth. They were golden days with Rome, when it could be said of her,

Quos domuit, nexuque pio longinqua revinxit.

But when under her emperors, by her proconsuls she plundered her provinces, and by an abandoned soldiery she harrassed her own citizens, her glory fled, and she hastened to ruin.

I FURTHER

I FURTHER reply to this objection, that our present restrictions not only affect the policy of a state, but the progress of the polite arts. If we wish literature to appear with true dignity and ease at our public academies, why do we confine her walks, and load her with shackles? What a strange decision was this of the synod of Arles in France? "Professors of philosophy in handling physical or metaphysical questions, which have a correspondence with divinity, shall take care, that they so do it, as not to injure in the least the principles of our true religion, which principles shone forth in the writings of those famous divines, whom the Lord raised up to kindle in the last century the flambeau of the gospel in these and the neighbour nations." † That is, our professors shall keep within the circle of calvinistic orthodoxy.

Is our Oxford statute less exceptionable? Item, it is ordained, "that no professor, or public lecturer, directly or indirectly teach, or in laying down positions assert any thing, which in any measure opposes the Catholic Faith."* That is, they shall say nothing, which in the least contradicts the articles of 1562.

OTHER examples, beside those of Galileo, and two French editors of Sir Isaac Newton's works, prove, that established formularies of faith have suppressed the discoveries of human science; and innumerable instances might be produced of their evil influence on rational theology. As a specimen of this tendency, I will lay before

† Quick's Synodicon. Vol. II. Chap. 15.

* Excerpta e Corp. Stat. Oxon, Tit. IV, 17,

fore the reader Mr. Tyrwhitt's questions, † referred to page 38, suspecting with Dr. Disney, "that the rejection of them rather argued some distrust of certain opinions gaining converts by an open discussion of them."

AND further, if we wish to see learning spread refinement and humanity through a nation, why do we make her wear a partial appearance? I have, indeed, already been led to remark, that the exertions of industry have proved too strong for the arm of oppression. But while such exertions reflect honour on the injured parties, do they not justify complaints, which proceed from malicious restrictions? Do we conceive, that liberality is profusion, or, that even to do justice would injure a community? Surely examples might be produced, which shew, that an impartial distribution of literary advantages neither tarnish the lustre of science, nor debase political wisdom.

BUT we stand too near to see ourselves; and I am sorry, to be forced to look beyond the banks of Isis, and Cam for such laudable examples.

AMONG the ancient Romans, then, after their youth had

† I. *Preces Christianorum ad Deum solum, patrem Jesu Christi, dirigendæ sunt.*

II. *In cœtum Christianum recipiendi sunt, qui Jesum pro vero Messia agnoscunt, etsi illum vel Deo longe inferiorem, vel etiam merum hominem esse credant.*

III. *Lex Christiana æternis pœnis non sancitur.*

IV. *Nullum fidei Christianæ dogma in sacris scripturis traditum, est rectæ rationi dissentaneum.* *Memoirs of the Life of Dr. Jebb, prefixed to his Works, page 31, by Dr. Disney.*

had been prepared by a domestic education, and put on the MANLY GOWN, they were introduced into the forum, and entered on the practice of pleading. This was at the age of seventeen, and done with all imaginable solemnity, but without either oaths or subscriptions. ‡ The Athenian youth, indeed, took an oath of obedience to the government, and the religion of their country, * but the oath was very different in its nature from that administered among us, nor was it taken at their places of literature. Among the ancient Persians, none were excluded by law from honours and civil offices: all might send their children to the public schools of justice, and all might advance through the different orders of children — of youth — of men — and of old men.— Such was their civil œconomy, adds Xenophon, in the practice of which the Persians think they have the greatest excitements to become eminently good. † This policy was attended with no inconvenience to these governments, nor weakened the authority of literature.

Fas est et ab hoste doceri.

LET us take a comparative view of this affair in New and Old England. “In New England, where the legislative bodies are almost to a man Dissenters from the church of England, I. There is no test to prevent churchmen

‡ Cicero de Oratoribus.

* Johannis Stobaei Sentent. Sermo. 41. page 243. Edit. Lugden. Warburton has quoted this oath with an air of great triumph; but I shall shew elsewhere, that it was not a case in point, and that the doughty champion shouted victory too soon.

† Xenophon. Κυρ. Παιδ, A. page 13. Hutchinson. Edit. 4 ta,

men from holding offices. II. The sons of churchmen have the full benefit of the Universities. III. The taxes for the support of public worship, when paid by churchmen, are given to the Episcopal minister. — I. In Old England Dissenters are excluded from all places of trust and honour. II. The benefits of education in our Universities are appropriated to the sons of churchmen. III. The clergy of the Dissenters receive none of the tythes, paid by the people, who must be at the additional charge of maintaining their own separate worship.* The inhabitants of New England tell us, that no public disorders proceed from this regard to private liberty. The common rights of the different sects both in New England and also in Philadelphia, are guarded by civil government, and yet political confidence is not weakened, the public peace is not interrupted, commercial pursuits are not retarded, the principle of morals receives no shock, nor does literature, by being made common, sink into contempt. — Scotland too has vastly the superiority over England. An access to civil employments in Scotland not being made through the medium of sacramental tests, nor is Subscription the price of Degrees at its Universities, though it be for ministerial ordination. And whether the Scotch Universities of late years have been inferior to our own, I leave to the decision of the candid and truly learned in both our Universities.

In Ireland too no sacramental test is required for civil employments. The test act was repealed about ten years ago, and

* Vid. Dr. Franklin's Miscellaneous Works. A Letter in which the State of Toleration in New and Old England is compared. Page 74.

and we are told from respectable authority, § that, when a regular plan was formed for the overthrow of the national church, its very existence, in a measure, was owing to the conduct of the Dissenters. || Thus too would a University increase her strength, and extend her reputation, as she opened her arms to people of all denominations. The University of Dublin, I am informed, requires no Subscription.

THERE are, I am convinced, many liberal and respectable men in both our Universities, who, on the most mature deliberation, have avowed sentiments similar to these. It is not Mr. Archdeacon Paley only, who would acknowledge, "that Subscriptions perpetuate the proscription of sects, and tenets, from which any danger has long ceased to be apprehended." These men with large views, not to be confined by partial and antiquated articles, have not been backward to make liberal concessions in favour of some disqualified persons ; concessions, which have reflected higher honour on those who have made them, than on those, who have frequently received them. But they feel themselves in embarrassments and difficulties, against which they see no remedy. Here then the objection has been started, which appears to me the capital one, from the very nature of our University establishments, and the terms of our college statutes. What can we do, it has been said, with institutions, confined by the express restrictions of the original benefactors? We wish
our

§ Bishop of Cloyne.

|| The Right of the Protestant Dissenters to a Complete Toleration Asserted. Chap. VI.

our terms of admission were more generous; and that not being incumbered with the crude imperfections of antiquity, they might conform to the maxims and manners of a more enlightened age. — Yet can we deny, that our ancestors might divert their benefactions into what channels they pleased, and confine them by boundaries of their own raising? How can we suffer them to take a course, which the Founder's limitations do not allow, and violate statutes, to which we have sworn obedience? These persons, improved by the liberality of a more refined age, are themselves superior to the peculiarities and partialities of their more barbarous ancestors. But the statutes are unmanageable, they cannot repeal them.

THIS I call the capital objection; yet is it not so general, as to admit of no exceptions. Indeed, it ought only to apply to those, who are candidates for college favours. These should be disposed to comply with the terms laid on them by the Founders, or not offer themselves candidates for their bounty. But many, it is clear, retire to our places of literature, who ask no college favours, who court no University preferments. Being sent there with a view to prepare them for public life, all that is solicited for them of a college is a free participation of literary advantages, all that is asked of a University is the recommendation of a degree; and a request so moderate and so reasonable should, surely, be subject to no restrictions whatever.

As to the statutes of particular colleges, whether drawn up by the immediate hand, or under the particular direction of their respective founders, or whether left to the discretion

discretion of surviving trustees, they would naturally follow the pleasure of those particular persons, and wear the complexion of those imperfect times, in which they were framed. But even these statutes will not be allowed to have so binding a force, as to suffer no variation from their original strictness. They must share the fortune of other statutes, acts of parliament, and canons, which through the variableness of times, of people, and of customs, must either fall intirely into disuse, or submit to an interpretation, which the age can bear. Thus only can foundations keep time with those improvements, which our ancestors could not foresee, and against which they could make no provision. A statute of one of our colleges, founded in the times of popery, runs thus, "Fifthly, you shall swear, that when the name of the Founder or Foundress are repeated, you shall pray for them in particular, and for the Foundress and Benefactors of the same college, in returning daily thanks." In the former part of this clause the doctrine of purgatory is implied, the popular doctrine in Henry the 6ths reign, but now generally disbelieved among Protestants. Notwithstanding this statute, the President and Fellows do not hold themselves bound to pray for their Foundress; nor would, I conceive, if even the legislature had made no provision for them, though, in returning daily thanks, they will feel gratitude for her favours.

ON these considerations, though, with my present sentiments, I would not be a candidate for college favours, yet had I really enjoyed any, no subsequent change in my religious opinions, though directly opposite to the doctrines of the church, and even incapacitating me

for attending college worship, would have disposed me to relinquish them. "When the sentiments and customs of a people change, the laws also should change." Church preferment, if I had held any, I would certainly have resigned. But surely, it is not the current opinion of 1789, that men should lose their rank in civil society for religious speculations.

NUMEROUS laws are the natural effect of freedom. For changes are perpetually making in the customs, opinions, religion, and property of nations, which require the assistance of legislation: and where there is no arbitrary influence, they will receive it. But happy are those institutions, which in their original foundation are subject to few laws! Painful experience having taught mankind, that it is easier to frame laws entirely new, than to remove ancient prejudices.

HERE I meant to have closed this view of my subject: but I must trespass on the reader's patience a little longer. I would observe, then, that what has been hitherto advanced on Universities, proceeds on this principle, that all their privileges, and emoluments, of whatever kind they are supposed to be, should be accessible to the public at large.

FOR it is doubted, I know, by some, men too of no mean figure in the literary world, whether degrees are of any importance to real science. The honours conferred

conferred in the schools, and at our public examinations, the premiums also assigned to particular exercises, when bestowed with impartiality, have, indeed, acknowledged advantages. But no proof of merit, they affirm, can be collected from a mere degree. "The foolish exercises, performed in the public schools at Oxford for a Bachelor and Master of Arts degree are well known to be too ridiculous to deserve a serious censure. †" A very capable judge has, indeed, remarked, that there is no University in Europe, where the first degree is obtained so honourably, as at Cambridge. * This is, I suppose, in general true. And yet it cannot be denied, that a mere degree is frequently procured without any literary attainments.

PUBLIC annual examinations still continue the wish of many persons, of the first consideration in letters. It cannot, they think, be denied, that some such plan of reform, as that proposed by Dr. Jebb, § would tend to awaken a spirit of emulation, to promote a uniform tenor of application, and afford a truer estimate of real merit, than the partial and ineffective systems, pursued at present in both our Universities.

I HAVE also heard it questioned by some well affected and judicious Tutors, whether, on the whole, our fellowships

† Knox's Essays. N. XIX. LXXVII.

* Bishop Watson. Preface to his Theological Tracts.

§ Remarks upon the Present Mode of Education in the University of Cambridge, with a Proposal for its Improvement, Jebb's Works, Vol. II. page 260.

lowships are not to be considered as an evil in academical life. It being their judgment, that if our seats of literature were occupied only by effective men, such as Masters, Tutors, and Professors, our discipline would be more simple, the progress of literature rendered more easy, and the morals of the students less exposed to danger. To say nothing of that appearance of ancient monkery, which these appointments now wear, and of their tendency to suppress exertions, which render men useful and conspicuous on the theatre of public life.

BUT it does not fall within my province to intermeddle with defects in discipline, or to propose schemes of reformation. Yet to plead the cause of impartial justice, and of equal liberty is the duty of all. And whether degrees, bestowed as they now are, be considered as necessary distinctions, to ascertain the different standing of members in collegiate life, or as kind of certificates to the world of a person's having been called to a liberal profession, and in whatever light we view our Fellowships, whether as a compensation for the expence of a learned education, as a calm retreat for men of scientific minds or as a reward for personal virtues, whatever view, I say, we take of them, I must still contend, they ought not to be appropriated to one party, nor be subject to the law of Subscription.

AND could no policy be adopted by our learned bodies, more generous in its intentions, and more permanent in its effects, than what has hitherto been practiced? Surely there might; though I fear, it could not exert itself within our present college walls. But a UNIVERSITY

is possessed of an extensive authority: and if a spirit, emulous of great undertakings, pervaded its members, might effect the noblest purposes. If a University, as it admitted new light, was disposed to rectify ancient mistakes, the legislature would be ready to give its support: and, in time, there might be effected a truly generous discipline, proving, how far institutions founded in justice, and directed by benevolence would bless a nation.

SOME corporate societies it would be political wisdom entirely to abolish. In ancient times, borough corporations formed a useful barrier against the tyranny of domineering barons. But they are now not only useless, but very injurious to civil liberty. † These are scarce susceptible of any generous reform. But our academical establishments are capable of very useful improvements, though, in their present state, exposed to the censure of being “mere fortresses for the church,”* and must, proportionably, stop the current of public liberty. Of this we have a singular example, not only in the appropriating spirit, securing collegiate emoluments to churchmen in England, but in the partial attention paid to the Irish and Scotch Universities. For though persons, who have obtained a degree in the former, may be admitted *ad eundem* at Oxford and Cambridge, no such indulgence is shewn to the graduates of the latter.

By what means, at what period, and by what persons such revolutions shall be affected in the sentiments of mankind,

† Lately exemplified in the borough of Cambridge. Vid. Reflections on the Contentions and Disorder of the Borough of Cambridge,

* Dr. Price,

mankind, and whether foundations arising out of such enlarged sentiments will be improvements of ancient models, or as it were edifices entirely new, formed of modern materials, and reared by original workmen, it would be rashness to decide. Yet will I hazard a conjecture, that the men, whom providence will raise up to be the instruments of its benevolent designs, will not be selfish in their tempers, narrow in their judgements, violent in their passions, or ambitious in their projects. They will be lovers of truth, and capable of making those sacrifices, which she demands of her friends : aiming to be the patrons of mankind, rather than the leaders of a sect, they will be attached to every being, susceptible of reason ; they will reverence human nature. Far from being promoters of confusion in society, they will be studious to promote good order, mutual harmony, and political strength : in a word, they will be men, who will love their brethren, fear God, and honour the king.

THIS subject, I am convinced, very intimately concerns the interest of society, and would give exercise to the most respectable abilities. What I can say is very far beneath the importance of the subject. But sentiments have been delivered by different writers, deserving the serious attention of civil, and religious rulers. Rough and uncourtly as they may have frequently appeared, this must be acknowledged, that the reasonings, which plead the cause of mankind are not the partial arguments of a Dissenter against a Churchman, or of a Churchman against a Dissenter, of a Catholic against a Protestant, or of an Infidel against a Christian, but the unsophisticating, and I think, the unanswerable plea of human nature against

against every domineering influence. For I am very much mistaken, if there be not a secret corner in the human heart, where sophistry cannot enter, into which, would we condescend to look, the present mode of Subscription at our Universities will appear abhorrent from the first principles of natural justice, and of common benevolence.

I ADD, that the circumstances of the times are a call to liberality. Improvements in natural knowledge, in religion, and in politics, gain ground in our Universities. Several European states have been rectifying political errors. Generous experiments have been made by the Americans in their academical institutions, and proved effective: and in England, the Dissenters are now setting us an example of public spirit; "A fundamental principle of their new College being, that it will be open to people of all denominations. ||" But whatever encourages the hopes of the friends to reformation, will, in the issue, entail disgrace on those, who labour to retard it.

THE principles of this first part will be found to agree with those of Mr. Locke in his Treatise on Government, and his first Letter on Toleration. And if he had applied his reasoning to the present subject, he would have treated it, indeed, in a far nobler manner, but I am persuaded, he would have come to the same conclusion.

PART

|| The Report, &c. at the close of Dr. Price's Sermon, entitled, *The Evidence for a Future Improvement in the State of Mankind.*

1855
I have every confidence in the
result of the trial. It is not a
simple matter to prove a
crime, and the jury will
be careful to do so. The
evidence is all against the
defendant.

I am sure that the jury will
find the defendant guilty. The
evidence is all against him.
He has no alibi. He has no
other explanation. He has
no other way out. He has
no other way to escape. He
has no other way to avoid
the punishment. He has no
other way to avoid the
law. He has no other way
to avoid the consequences.
He has no other way to avoid
the punishment. He has no
other way to avoid the law.
He has no other way to avoid
the consequences.

I am sure that the jury will
find the defendant guilty. The
evidence is all against him.
He has no alibi. He has no
other explanation. He has
no other way out. He has
no other way to escape. He
has no other way to avoid
the punishment. He has no
other way to avoid the law.
He has no other way to avoid
the consequences.

PART

The Report of the Chief of Police
of the City of New York
for the Year 1855

PART II.

CHAP. I.

Short History of Confessions, and of the Thirty-nine Articles.

PRIOR to the golden æra of the Reformation, the Roman Pontiff held Europe in ignominious subjection. Reason was confined to very limited exertions: philosophy being curbed by theological restraints, and theology circumscribed by ecclesiastical law. For as faith, once supposed to consist in a belief of divine revelation, and to relate only to religion, was now made to consist in an implicit consent to the papal doctrines, the church thought itself authorized to give boundaries to human science. The Pontiff was infallible, and the church had the perpetuity of the faith.

It is true, there were, even in the darkest times, many enlightened Christians; who, detecting the sophistry of these claims, dared to consult their own understandings. But, in general, the tide of opinion flowed the opposite way. It was reckoned absurd to suppose, that he, who possessed the prerogatives of God, and was even styled so in the canon law, † could possibly think wrong; and impertinent, to accuse a church of errors, that would reply, “We are the true church, and the true church cannot err.” †

THE pretensions of the clergy kept pace with the encroachments of their ecclesiastical sovereign. They, in general, were in possession of all the little learning of the times, they, principally, held the great offices of state, and occupied an exorbitant share in the property of Europe. Robertson remarks, || that the Scotch clergy paid one half of the taxes, laid on land: they held, therefore, little less than half the property of that kingdom. The power, which they had gained over the property of mankind strengthened their authority over the understanding. Men, who in a civil capacity had been accustomed to view those beneath them as their vassals, or their subjects, were not disposed, when they appeared in a religious character, to over-rate human reason. The powers of the mind being thus held in slavery, contradictions wore the air

† Decret. Prima Pars. Distinct. 46. C. 7.

Raynoldus says, that at the coronation of Alexander the 6th there might be seen in different parts of the streets of Rome the following epigram,

*Cæsare magna fuit, nunc Roma est maxima, sextus
Regnat Alexander, ille vir, iste Deus.*

Claude's Defence of the Reformation. Part I. Chap. II.

† Claude. ut supra. Part I. Chap. VI.

|| Hist. of Scotland, Vol. I. page 142. 5th Edit.

air of consistency, and absurdities passed current for truth.

BUT, as literature revived in Europe in the 16th century, men began to feel their own importance, and reason grew impatient of religious restraints. It became, therefore, absolutely necessary, that the state of religion should undergo an alteration. Previous, however, to this undertaking, a most important question was to be settled, which was, whether in religion men have a right to follow their private determinations, or should submit to public authority. The Roman Pontiff continued to enforce subjection : but a spirit of reform was gone forth, and the men, whom it pervaded, were no longer disposed to obey,

THOSE who led the way in the great work of Reformation, were little aware of the extent of their own principles. Other men soon arose of different sentiments, who ventured also to claim the same privilege. Such were those well informed, respectable, and sorely injured asserters of the unity of God, who formed assemblies through Poland, Hungary, and Transylvania, and the German Baptists, those warm asserters of the civil and religious liberties of mankind. Some made an immediate separation, while others, at first, united with their orthodox brethren. But, at length, the latter glowing with religious zeal, began to view them as heretics, and were unwilling to let them share with them the benefit of public worship. This is particularly true of those Unitarians, who formed the first church at Cracow, in Po-

land. § Having exercised the grand prerogative of rational beings, to think for themselves, they also set up separate places of worship.

IN proportion to the different judgements, and the different interests of mankind, disputation grew violent, and various disorders ensued. The Catholics charged these disorders on the principles of the “pretended reformed.”

THE leaders of the Reformation thought it expedient to wipe off the aspersions. They found cause, therefore, to make a public declaration of their principles, laid civil and ecclesiastical restraints on private judgement, and, while lying under a charge of heresy themselves, wished to make it appear, that they also held no communion with heretics. But how was this to be done? Public confessions were soon drawn up, and a profession of uniformity subscribed by all the teachers. In 1563, the decrees of the council of Trent were confirmed by Pope Pius the Fourth, and the year following ecclesiastics sworn to obey the pope, the decisions of councils, particularly those of Trent, and to receive the doctrines of the church; of which some were less circumstantial than those contained in the confessions of the reformed.

THE protestant princes of Germany had already set an example. A diet was held at Ausburg in 1530, under Charles the 5th, and there an explicit confession, confirmed by the leaders of the several churches, received its birth.† This effort, however, was not sufficient, for uniformity

§ Præfat. ad Opera Crellii apud Frat. Polon. Vol. II. Sub. fin.

† Confessional, Chap. I. page 5. 2d. edit.

formity was a slippery thing, and Protestants could not so easily secure it. To give, however, public proof, that if other churches were heretical, the Belgic, and Gallican churches, at least, were orthodox sisters, they drew up a HARMONY, the faith of eleven protestant churches! On the same principles proceeded the Book of Concord among the Remonstrants in Holland, and in 1612 the Corpus Confessionum at Geneva.*

In England, the case stands as follows. After Harry the 8th. had taken the supremacy of the church from the triple crown, and placed it in his own, by virtue of his newly acquired authority, he appointed 6 articles, ordaining among other things, "That all Bishops, and Ministers are to believe the whole Bible, the three creeds, the Apostles, the Nicene and Athanasian, and interpret all things according to them, and in the same words." In the preface it is said † "They are to maintain unity, and concord in opinion." In Edward the 6ths reign, Cranmer and others, remonstrated against these articles, ("That monstrous hydra with 6 heads," as Mr. Fox § calls them) and they were repealed; but 42 articles were published "for the avoiding diversity of opinion, and gaining true consent, touching true religion." In Queen Elizabeth's reign 11 articles were set out by order of the Metropolitans, and the rest of the Bishops, "For the unity of doctrine, to be holden by all parsons, vicars, and curates,

* Confessional. Chap. I. page 9, 10, 11, 12, 2d edit.

† Burnet's Hist. of the Reformation. Part I. Book III. page 116.

§ Acts and Monuments. Vol. II. Edw. VIth. Anno 1547.

curates, as well in testification of their common consent in the said doctrine, as to the stopping of the mouths of them, that go about to slander the ministers of the church for diversity of judgement.* Some time after the whole was surveyed, and they were comprized within a compact little system of 39 articles,

It must not be said, these articles will admit a latitude of interpretation, being framed to testify common consent; we may not talk of a private interpretation of articles, designed to prevent a diversity of judgement. By those, indeed, who are acquainted with the history of the times under consideration, it must, I think, be allowed, that the notion of diversity of judgement never entered the minds of the English Reformers. They supposed, rightly enough, that scripture had but one meaning, yet were rather too confident, that they were in possession of the truth. And in confirmation of this, let it be recollected, that when the Harmony of confessions was published, among those of other reformed churches, appeared that of the church of England.† So that Bishop Burnet, though disposed on other occasions to a liberality of interpretation, ingenuously confesses in his History of the Reformation, that the 39 articles were something more than articles of peace, and adds, “That the men who subscribed did either believe them to be true, or else they did grossly prevaricate.§”

DOES not too the royal declaration, afterwards prefixed to them, and never invalidated by any act of the legislature, further § preclude a latitude of Subscription?

* Burnet's Hist. of the Reformation.

† Strype's Annals. Vol. I. Chap. 25, — 27.

§ Burnet, ut supra. Part II. Book I.

tion? The articles were to be subscribed "Ex animo, in the literal and grammatical sense." Without such Subscription, no ecclesiastic can be admitted to any charge in the church.

THIS Subscription is demanded by the canons. For it has been observed, that by the 13th Eliz. C. 12. Subscription is enjoined to those articles, "Which only concern the confession of the true christian faith, and the doctrine of the Sacrament:" and that by 14 Car. II. the articles "to be subscribed" are the articles "mentioned" in the preceeding statute; the limiting clause, therefore, being still in force, there is no act of the legislature, imposing Subscription to all the 39.* Observations of this kind will fall in the way of the next Part of my Inquiry. It suffices to remark here, that the origin of the act of uniformity, under Charles the Second, and various clauses in it,† suppose the reception of the disciplinarian, as well as the doctrinal, and sacramental articles, and that the canons of the church do actually impose them all.

By such conduct did the Reformers betray their own cause, undermining the grand principle, which supported the fabric of protestantism. By framing creeds, and confessions, by drawing up articles, and laws, they furnished the romish disputants with arguments, which were used with dextrous management to invalidate the Reformation. For the sentiments of the Reformers did not, unfortunately, allow them to lay claim to an infallible head. So that, after all their pretensions to harmonizing, their
adversaries

* Confessional, Pref. 10, &c. 2d. Edit.

† Burn's Eccles. Law, Vol. I. Articles, P. 74.

adversaries still asked, "What reason can be given for this so great difference, but their want of that leader and governor who alone can, and ought, to confirm all the brethren in the faith, and retain the whole church in unity." Thus triumphs Bellarmine, || who had before affirmed, "That there was never one general council among the reformed, in which they agreed in any one article." The celebrated Bossuet in France too managed this argument with the most plausible sophistry against the learned protestant reformer, Claude. The success is well known. The cause of truth was overpowered by the champion for error!*

C H A P. II.

Ideas. The Operations of the Mind, and how affected by Subscription.

HAVING satisfied myself, that our present mode of Subscription is inconsistent with the natural rights of mankind, I proceed to inquire, how far it is consistent with the powers of the human mind? my Inquiry has hitherto been confined to the seats of the muses. It now takes

|| Opera Bellarmini. Vol. I. De Rom. Pont. page 130. Præfat.

* Robinson's Life of Monsieur Claude, prefixed to his Essay on the Composition of a Sermon. Vol. I. page 38.

takes the liberty of entering the hallowed walls of the church.

THAT the articles are not universally believed will not be disputed, and that reasoning men find very strong objections against them cannot be denied: which affords one argument, I think, that the voice of reason is against them. *Some* Some, indeed, ingenuously give them up, as irrational and indefensible; while others are indebted to a low sophistry to make them wear any tolerable appearance. A Turkish Effendi, who had no objection to drinking wine with philosophers and great personages, once said to an English ambassadress, "The prohibition of wine was good policy, and designed for the common people."|| Thus English Effendis treat articles and creeds, they subscribe them, but leave the people to believe them.

THE present question does not depend on any physical notion concerning the human understanding. I shall have occasion, indeed, to make many free remarks on spirit, &c. in the course of my Inquiry, but shall at present decline speculations of this kind. For whether the thinking principle called the mind, be the effect of a refined organization of matter, or a spiritual agent, that can move independent of the body; and whether ideas be the necessary consequence of sensations often repeated and making changes on the medullary substance of the brain through vibrations on the nerves, according to Mr. Hartley,* or be collected by the voluntary exertions of an

|| Lady Montague's Letters.

* Observations on Man. Part I. Sect. I. Prop. IV, V.

an immaterial substance, according to the popular notion: whatever I say, we determine concerning the nature of the human mind, and the immediate instrument of its motions, its powers and faculties will continue the same.

BUT it is of importance to observe, that all knowledge consists in the view, which the mind has of its own ideas † agreeing or disagreeing, and that all our ideas must either proceed through the medium of the senses, or from the exercise of reflection: these being the original ground-work of all our future knowledge. Mr. Locke's manner of stating the matter will answer every purpose of this Inquiry; though I think with Mr. Hartley, that the ideas of reflection are but complex ideas of sensation, the latter being the elements of which the former are composed. ‡

It is also of importance to note the various operations of the understanding, which are four. I. Perception. II. Judgement. III. Reasoning. IV. Method. There are exercises distinguished by different names, such as remembering, abstracting, &c. which, however, will all fall under one or other of these divisions.

It will follow, that where we have no ideas, and perceive not wherein they agree or differ, we have no knowledge, and that to attain knowledge, we must have a capacity for it.

WHAT,

† Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding. Book II. Chap. I.

‡ Hartley's Observations on Man. Part I, Chap. I. Sect. II.

WHAT, if it shall appear, that many things contained in the 39 Articles lie out of the road of the human understanding? We may indeed multiply words, and indulge our fancies, but we can have no ideas. Have we distinct ideas of the term Trinity? School-divinity, indeed, is frequently nothing but dust thrown in the way of the understanding, which keeps out real knowledge. I think it, therefore, well remarked by a learned writer, "Where too much divinity mixes with our logic, it is much if it has any meaning."* This remark will appear more true, in proportion as our divinity is more mysterious: do I understand incomprehensibles or contradictions?

FROM hence too it will follow, that there is a kind of order, which the mind pursues, where we attain real knowledge; that as there are different operations of the understanding, their places are also distinct, and their exercises successive, depending on each other, and that an operation, the last in rank cannot take place of the first. Thus we cannot form an accurate judgement, till we have a clear perception of ideas; we cannot reason with effect, till we have judged with precision: and till these previous steps be gone over, there is no place for method. From the doctrine of the Trinity men reason to other doctrines: but first, Do they understand that doctrine?

It is evident also, that the progress of truth may be quickened or retarded in the understanding according to the medium, through which we view it. The heavenly bodies through a telescope appear larger, than when
viewed

* Baker's Reflections on Learning, P. 61. 3d, edit.

viewed through the bare atmosphere, by the naked eye of the observer. Some glasses magnify, others diminish objects. And bodies may even appear of a colour directly opposite to their real one, according to the medium through which they are examined. Are the 39 articles a proper medium, through which to view the christian doctrines?

I OBSERVE further, that every proposition is either true or false. If any number of propositions be true, and capable of almost mathematical demonstration; yet if they consist of metaphysical distinctions, and refined subtleties, without superior abilities, we cannot understand them, and, how can we subscribe to the truth of them? For if truth in the understanding be called the agreement or disagreement of the ideas in our minds with the reality of things,† where such perception is not, truth is not. For however true a proposition be, and however clear a perception others may have of it, yet in regard to my mind, where no such perception is, it forms no truth; and where we cannot connect the ideas, of which a proposition is composed, it is impossible to believe it. I speak not of theological mysteries.

Now that the materials contained in the 39 articles are of this kind, will be evident to every accurate inquirer, and is apparent by the practice of many young men, of eminent learning. Before they thought themselves qualified to subscribe, have they not found it necessary to adjust many metaphysical niceties, to settle many difficult points in polemical divinity, to ascertain many
disputed

† Locke, ut supra, Vol. II. Book, IV. Chap. 5.

disputed particulars in the history of their own country? And sometimes, in order to determine the "rights of the church," have they not been known to inquire into the nature, and precise differences of episcopal conventions, provincial convocations, diocesan synods, and provincial councils? * Such is frequently the practice of candidates for orders, when persons of serious thought and of upright consciences, and, of course, not disposed to subscribe "in the gross," which, latter practice however, I am sorry to say is too often the case.

LET us, for example, take that article, which asserts, "The church has power to decree rites and ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith." Should we not inquire, whom we are to understand by the church? A question not very easily settled.† Should we not also ascertain whether there be any rites and ceremonies, imposed by the Founder of our religion, of an invariable nature; and whether there be any, of themselves indifferent, left to the discretion of the christian church? Should not too the precise meaning of these judicial terms "power to decree, and authority" be settled? And finally, should we not inquire, How far such power and authority may be exercised consistently with the precepts of scripture, and the laws of the land?

So again the nineteenth article asserts, "That the churches of Jerusalem, of Alexandria, of Antioch, and of Rome, have erred in the manner of ceremonies, and in matters of faith."

BEFORE

* Wake's Rights of the Church.

† Robinson's Translation of Claude's Essay on the Composition of a Sermon, Vol. II, page 262. Notes,

BEFORE we can believe that proposition, must we not be acquainted with all the ceremonies, and all the doctrines of all those churches, and compare them with the rule of truth, the sacred scriptures? Otherwise how can we affirm, with truth, that all those churches have erred "in manner of ceremonies, and in matters of faith." What a great compass of knowledge is necessary to the belief of this proposition, "General councils have erred!" "The eastern general councils were six in number; the western clergy were obliged to meet twelve times, before they could settle a system of faith to their minds. The history of these councils is abridged in about as many folios, which it will be necessary for us to read over, together with the fathers they refer to," § and I will add the standard of truth, by which they must be compared, ere we can believe the proposition. — The petition of the undergraduates in the University of Cambridge, together with four Letters of Dr. Jebb's to the candidates for the degree of bachelor of arts will exemplify my meaning.

Now if we be unacquainted with the materials, comprized within any number of propositions, we must be in a situation, in regard to the truths, which they contain, similar to what a blind man is in respect of colours, or a deaf man in respect of sounds. For though we may have rational faculties to a certain degree, yet if they be not capable of attaining the knowledge necessary to the belief of those propositions, we shall be in nearly the same situation. They may be true; but do not ask a weak man to subscribe to their truth.

THESE

§ Jebb's Works. Vol. I. p. 195.

THESE examples of historical propositions will shew what knowlege is necessary for the belief of metaphysical and doctrinal articles. I shall not, therefore, enlarge here: but cannot help noting, still further to illustrate this matter, the curious structure of the human mind, and how admirably language accommodates itself to all its wants. Hence it is, that as many collections of ideas may coincide, and appear a simple idea, so a single term may express numerous ideas, and a single proposition a great variety of truths. § But this conciseness, and if I may so speak, pliability of language, is not only favourable to that particular process of the mind called abstracting, but to the simplicity and copiousness of truth in general. From the vast ocean of human opinions we collect but few invariable truths: and these reduced to their proper size, would occupy but little room. Hence the propriety of the ancient saying, *Μεγα βιβλιον μεγα κακον.*

To those, who have been in the habit of inquiry it will appear, that these remarks apply more readily to religious and metaphysical truths, than to any other. Were we to analyze the 39 articles, to trace all the propositions to their original principles, and to see where they all bottom, in the “method of Invention,” as logicians call it, were we to review the materials, of which they are composed, and make a fair estimate of the knowlege, which they contain, if true, it would be found prodigious. Let me seriously ask, Is it possible for a person of slender capacity to gain a knowlege essential to the belief

§ Introductory Essays to Hartley's Theory of the Human Mind. Essay III. by Dr. Priestley.

lief of the 39 articles, supposing them true? I do not stop to lay much stress on this question, “Whether while men’s attention be thus called to things beyond their reach, they are not prevented from attaining what is within their power?”†

THESE questions may be asked, admitting the truth of the articles. But how will the case stand, if they happen to be false? Thus. There is a symmetry and proportion in truth, by which it recommends itself to the human understanding, and coalesces with its operations, and these operations are the only proper judges of it. Rays of truth, beaming from that eternal sun, which enlightens all rational beings, have a natural reception in the human mind, which is formed to receive them; and if it be not disordered by low passions, in proportion to the strength of its faculties, and the perspicuity and order in which objects are presented to it, truth will always appear beautiful, and error deformed. But if the articles be false, will they not become those obstructing mediums, of which I spoke before, which instead of conveying to the understanding just notions of truth, will break its force and diminish its brightness? And while the native lustre of truth is thus tarnished the false images drawn on the mind, will occupy the room which ought to be kept sacred to real science. How many prejudices may Subscription lay the foundation of, which may stint the human faculties, and keep reason in leading-strings till it even grow grey! It is natural to suppose, that such articles will have the same effect on the human understanding

† Epicteti Enchirid. Cap. 59.

standing from twenty-three even to fourscore, that our nurseries' stories, and catechisms have had till twenty-three. They will become standards, to which we shall appeal as oracles of truth, rather than guides to help us in our inquiries after it. Some years hence I suspect, it will be found, that falsehoods, equal to any imposed on the world by the romish church, have passed current among us for evangelical truths, and that men, formed by nature with superior talents, and who have made solid acquisitions in human science, have, nevertheless, had their understandings enslaved by theological absurdities.

I HAVE asked, Whether Subscription may not lay the foundation for some unhappy prejudices? Let me be allowed to ask another question connected with this, which is, Whether our confessions, do not promote the two opposite extremes of enthusiasm and infidelity? Aristotle, it is well known, was unacquainted with that operation of the mind called Method, or Disposition. Hence it was, that his logic was, in a great measure, mere syllogistic trifling, and his disciples, after having possessed the schools so long, attained, comparatively, few settled truths. But when men began to pursue their inquiries in the way of Method, they found the golden key to the temple of science: and improvements, similar to what were made in natural philosophy by Induction, Experiment, and Analogy, were made in that science, which regards the human understanding.

By a close attention to the manner in which external objects affected them, by classing their sensations, by the regular arrangement of the ideas, proceeding from

K

them,

them, by inquiring into their intuitive notions, by tracing up to them, as their data, others more remote, by combining together numerous series of complex ideas, by collecting their ideas in correspondence with the reality of things, by affixing clear terms to those ideas, and expressing their definitions with plainness and perspicuity, in a word, by the whole of that artful procedure, called in the schools the "Method of Invention, and the Method of Science,"† men have unravelled the mechanism of the human mind, and are going on to something more of certainty, in matters, which have long held the world in doubt and dispute, than, perhaps, we can well conceive.

Was it to be wondered at, that men of science should wish to regulate their religious inquiries by the same laws, so far as they would apply? Was it be wondered at, that they should aim to subject our public confessions to a regular analysis, and pursue the whole series of propositions contained in them through their various combinations to self-evident truths, or the principles of common sense? And was it to be wondered at, that the public confessions in Christendom, became losers by this fiery trial? It may be doubted, indeed, whether any one could safely undergo it. What then? These confessions continue public standards; they were drawn up by christian doctors, subscribed by christian ministers, and received the sanction of christian kings — We are told, they are touching "the true religion," and may be proved by "most certain warrants of holy scripture;" in short, they have been supposed to contain the truths of
divine

† Duncan's Elements of Logic, Book IV,

divine revelation, and the consequence is, that a just disapprobation of what may prove human mistakes, are formed into unjust prejudices against the TRUTH itself,

ON the other hand, men of warm imaginations, but little reflection, seldom analyze their creeds; but finding systems ready made to their hand feel it much easier to assent than to inquire, and to subscribe, than to understand. — They say their creeds, expound the scriptures by them, and become zealous christians. — The latter are enthusiasts, and assent to every thing; the former become sceptics, and believe nothing.

OF characters thus formed several examples have fallen within my own observation. And it may be questioned, whether some of the most distinguished Deists and Enthusiasts in Europe have not been made in the same manner.

WE subscribe, that the creed called Athanasius's should be believed; we repeat it among christian people; we "receive it" and "believe it;" yet never understand it! We conclude too, "that this is the true catholic faith, which except a man believe faithfully, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly;" and we imagine, that the Devil has nothing to do, but to torture heretics in hell through endless ages! Or perhaps we read the article, we examine the creed, we endeavour to refer it to our first principles, the elements of true science. But in vain. We laugh at Athanasius; we despise christians; we say Mahomet was as cunning a man as Jesus, but think the "divine Socrates" was a better teacher than either.

C H A P. III.

Whether Subscription be consistent with the gradual Improvement of the Mind?

HAVING hitherto considered Subscription in relation to the mental powers themselves, I here naturally ask, Whether it will not also retard their future improvement? It is obvious to remark, the analogy between the faculties of the human understanding, and the limbs of the human body: both are kept in health by regimen, and improved by exercise. An active youth lays a foundation for an healthy manhood. But if at a time of life, when the limbs call for exertion, they be brought under confinement, the effects will be unfriendly to the constitution. "Strait cloathing spoils the shape." The Chinese women, as Mr. Locke observes, have very little feet, and are all cripples. The reason is, that the feet in infancy are confined within very little shoes, and are never suffered afterwards to enjoy their liberty. Mr. Locke also observes, the women are little and short lived: whereas the men are of a proper stature, and attain a proportionate age.†

† Locke's Treatise on Education.

Is it not natural to suppose, that Subscription will affect the understanding in the same manner? The inconvenience experienced by a few great minds will be considerable; but the evils introduced into a nation are infinite! For where the human faculties are thus confined, the progress of truth through a nation must be retarded. Truth is placed at the top of a hill, but will the mind have strength to ascend the eminence? To speak agreeably to our present allusion, will it not be crippled, and limp in all its motions, so as to be disposed to avoid the labour of inquiry, and fall too easily into the arms of implicit faith?

WHAT a beautiful variety is observable in man, as he advances through different stages of intellectual improvement! The possession of reason gives him his superiority over the creatures around him, and the proper management of it leads to the perfection of his nature; towards which, he may, indeed, be every day making insensible advances: yet, at no period, he completely attains it. For in proportion as the mind looks forward, and sees further, it receives new ideas; which do but lead on to fresh discoveries, and more enlarged improvements. A boundless prospect lies before it! Perceiving that our understandings have already undergone an actual change, we conclude, that in future life, they will undergo similar revolutions. The mind experiences so many changes, that it may, I think, be justly compared, as it has been, to the different appearances of nature in different seasons of the year. Hence man was called by the ancients,

cients, the microcosm, or little world.* When a philosopher surveys the works of nature, he is pleased with the variety apparent in the system; this variety, he says, produces order, and sheds lustre and beauty through the whole. Let him attend to the procedure of the human mind, and observe all its changes, and he will perceive the same variety. Then let him turn his attention to the Subscription of 39 articles! How will he reconcile uniformity of faith with this variety in the human understanding?

C H A P. IV.

Whether Subscription be consistent with that diversity of Opinions, to be observed in Mankind?

IF I feel it difficult to reconcile Subscription with those changes, to which individuals passing through different stages of intellectual improvement are subject, to reconcile it with that variety observable in human nature at large, appears still more difficult.

It is said, that there are some opinions, to which all mankind yield assent. § Not to contend at present,

that

* Philo. Jud. De mundi Opific. Agreeably to the same notion, Philo calls him *Εραχυν οραρον*, a little heaven. Ut sup. P. 14.

§ Fenelon sur l'existence de Dieu,

that the opinion itself is not true, such agreement was never pretended to relate to any other principles than those, which are deducible from our common nature, and explained by our common obligations.|| For in regard to opinions, which depend on the laws, manners and religion of nations, different people will necessarily think differently. The same people also will, on many subjects, necessarily think differently, while the texture of their understandings, their manner of education, and their means of gaining knowlege be so various.

How numerous were the opinions of the ancient Greek and Roman Philosophers on the nature of the chief good, and of the human soul! Do not think, that the Indian tribes are either uniform in their sentiments, or their complexions. An Indian reformer in the presence of an American missionary denied the being of a devil, and declared, that there was no such being known among the ancient Indians, whose religion he was reviving.† A certain infallible church has revolted against every principle of common sense, to weaken maxims, which they could never destroy, and to obtain an unity of speculation, which yet they could never secure. Ye are hives of heretics, says the supreme Head of the infallible church; “to the pretended reformed,” that have swarmed away from the original unity; and the “pretended reformed” reply to the Head of the infallible church, We boast an unity as firm, as your own. Nevertheless after all their HARMONIES these orthodox sisters had among them

|| Fenelon, ut supra.

† Brainerd's Journal, Dated Forks of Delaware, 1745.

them heterodox brethren — The church at Geneva, which thought itself strictly Calvinistic, has, at length, found itself Socinian, and another, which from the days of Cranmer to those of Laud espoused grace and predestination, from the time of Laud to the present has pleaded for freewill and general redemption. § — So little can we depend on Uniformity!

DIVERSITY of opinion has been found through christendom to bear proportion to the degree of liberty in a nation. Voltaire used to call Britain the land of Sects. All the opinions, that have been held in different parts of Europe, are professed in England. You grant it. But you say, that this variety is confined to the sectaries. Indeed! Is there no variety in the church, so called? It is no secret, sirs — We know your clergy, and various are their opinions. It has long been their favourite notion, “that unity of doctrine does not necessarily require perfect unity of private opinion.”† And, whether in the present instance this diversity of judgement proceed from the different prejudices of the clergy, their particular modes of education, their unequal capacities, or their various attainments in literary improvement, the clergy, so called, no less than our sectaries, are to be justified in asserting it. But I am puzzled to reconcile a Subscription to uniformity of sentiment with variety of sentiment in the same church, except by “a certain mechanical way of delivering

§ Toplady's Hist. Proof of the Doctrinal Calvinism of the Church of England, Vol. I. Sect. XIII. Vol. II. page 652 — 694.

† Heads of a Course of Lectures in Divinity, in the University of Cambridge, By John Hey, D.D. Book the Second, Chap. IV.

vering established doctrines, which is for teachers to have no opinion of their own."§

ALAS, ye sons of the Reformation! My understanding then is here aground. Forgive the inexperienced Inquirer, who asks you, What has been gained by articles of concord, and an act of uniformity?

WHAT has been treated with a worse grace by the Greek and Latin churches, than tradition? The churches of Asia celebrated Easter the 14th day of the moon after the vernal Equinox. They have, it seems, a tradition of St. John, and St. Philip, and on those traditions they ground their practice. The Sunday of our Lord's Resurrection is chosen by another part of the church, as the day, on which to celebrate this feast. They also plead apostolical tradition. Different, yea contradictory traditions are challenged by the Greeks, Nestorians, Abassines, Latins, and Armenians. According to some, Baptism is to be administered by trine immersion, and leavened bread to be used in the Eucharist: all varying in their practice in infinitum, yet all uniformly pleading tradition!*

THE Reformers asserted, that this disagreement destroyed the authority of tradition. Had they lived now they would have reasoned perhaps, equally well on uniformity. In a country like Britain, amid so many contending parties, they would scarce have aimed at establishing

§ Heads of a Course of Lectures, *ut supra*.

* Claude's Historical Defence of the Reformation, Part II. Page 257.

blishing one creed. Some writers have chosen to compare the understandings of men to different soils of earth; and the truths, which are proposed to them, to different sorts of grain. All soils are not equally favourable to every kind of grain: some grains requiring a richer soil, while others will thrive on a more barren. But how often is Plato the divine at variance with Plato the philosopher!

THE truth is, that in the allotment of human happiness, or, at least, of capacities for obtaining it, and in the appointment of motives to goodness, an even balance is preserved: and, on an accurate survey, it will be found, that all ranks and stations are, in this respect, much nearer a state of equality, than may be imagined. But an extensive knowledge being neither essential to happiness or virtue, a capacity for obtaining it, is not universal. Hence our minds are as differently formed, as our bodies, and our sentiments, often as unlike as our features.

BUT go, candidate for holy orders! survey the extent of our established formulary, study the nature of truth, of knowledge, and of faith, look into thine understanding, and form an accurate acquaintance with thyself, and say, if so it seem to thee, the public confession is incomprehensible, I cannot understand it; it is contradictory, I cannot believe it; it is comprehensive, my capacity will not enclose it. — What then? There is an act of uniformity. — What can be done in this case? — *keep out of Church*

POOR Urbanus! I knew him, and I loved him. He was a youth of polite manners, of calm passions, and of a be-

a benevolent heart, but his rational powers were weak, and his literary attainments very inconsiderable. I always thought him virtuous: he had too his favourite notions, and, among his equals, he would often say "There I must beg leave to differ." I met Urbanus one day in a dejected frame of mind. I asked him, whence it proceeded? Urbanus replied, "I was designed in early life for the church, and I am preparing for orders." Thou hast read, said I, the 39 articles. I saw he was alarmed; and he answered with a sigh "I do not comprehend them." We parted. He next day waited on Patronus, and disclosed to him all his scruples, and fears. Patronus, who was ambitious for his future advancement, replied, Be not righteous over much, Bishops will not stand for particulars. Canst thou fear to subscribe those articles as true, which were sealed by the blood of martyrs, and which, though not understood by thee, were certainly understood by them? Patronus was a politician as well as a friend to Urbanus, and knew, this to be the only evidence, suited to the capacity of his amiable friend.

I ADD, that Urbanus used to read Sterne; was a great admirer of Uncle Toby; and some benevolent sentiments, imbibed from him, he could never eradicate. Alas! to reconcile these with the articles and canons of the church was above the skill of Urbanus. He was the last person in the world to dispute a point with his superiors. All he used to say was, — "Uncle Toby would never have thought so."

BUT you are a rational being of a superior rank; a genius, and a philosopher. Condescend then to read the following chapter.

C H A P. V.

*The Principles of the preceeding Chapters
illustrated in the Example of Academicus.*

A CADEMICUS formed an acquaintance at one of our Universities, with the writings of Des Cartes, Sir Isaac Newton, and Mr. Locke. He saw one, by a refined scepticism, preparing the way for an investigation of abstruse knowlege: he saw the second, by analogical reasoning, arriving at solid demonstration; and the last, by a rejection of antiquated systems, and a review of the powers of his own mind, attaining, by slow advances, important truth.

OUR young philosopher, having gone through his course of mathematical studies, meant to resign himself, in future life, to the study of the scriptures. He was one day sitting in his study, and surveying our established creeds. He asked himself a plain question; "Where would have been the discoveries of these great men in the regions of science, if, as soon as they began to think to any purpose, their minds had been confined by a literary creed? Alas, for our Newtons, and our Lockes, had this been the case! These superior geniuses must then have

have left the field of inquiry, and subjected their understandings to men inferior to themselves."

ACADEMICUS was a young man of reading. He was not unacquainted with the writings of Moses, the Koran of Mohammed, or the Gospel of Jesus. He observed one Pentateuch, but numerous expositions of learned rabbies; one Koran, but numerous expositions of Mohammedan doctors; one Gospel, but jarring systems of christian casuists. Sabellians, and Arians, Athanasians, and Socinians, Jesuits and Jansenists, Lutherans and Calvinists, each, he saw, had their favourite system, and he was aware with what evil tempers they had been maintained. Critics and philosophers, he knew, had also their favourite controversies, and now and then, to shew their literary dexterity rapt the fingers of their fumbling opponents, calling them, perhaps, "dunces, drones, or fools," || &c. But these terms have not been founding enough for divines. They must contend "sharply" (*ωιξεως*) for the faith. Their opponents have, accordingly, been "heretics, knaves, beasts, dogs, and devils. †" Now and then they have thrown them into a dun-

|| *Homines quidem non acuti naris, ingenii tardioris, stolidi, stulti, &c. Vid. Criticos et Hypercriticos passim.*

† Heretici, nebulones, bestię, canes, and diaboli occur throughout Calvin's Institutes. See particularly his fine compliments to that learned physician, Michael Servetus. Even when writing Commentaries on the Scriptures, he calls him "Canis Hispanus, Spanish Dog." In his Institutes he calls his sentiments "diabolicam imaginationem, a devilish conceit," and then speaks of the "latratus impuri illius canis, the barkings of that impure Dog." Lib. II. Chap. 9, 3. The other Reformers of Germany and Switzerland use

a dungeon, to give them time to recollect themselves, or kindled a fire to throw light on the truth.

“AMID such diversity of opinion, and such severity of temper, said Academicus, there must be some egregious mistakes.” The question with him was, On which side did the truth lie?

OUR youth was always supposed to be ingenuous, and to love truth: but having been accustomed to philosophical accuracy, not over-hasty to become a believer.

“THE most probable way, said he, one day, of finding truth is to trace her, as it were, from the cradle. I will then consider my mind, as a “*papier blanc*,” on which the first sketches of truth have not yet been drawn. Every principle, which I have received from education, collected from books, or confirmed by argument, I will lay aside, as the fruit of early prejudice, of partial reading, or of immature judgement.†”

IN religion then he became, for a season, a sceptic; hoping, that whatever sentiments, in future life, he admitted as true, might flow from a conviction, founded on reason, and end in a faith, depending on evidence. “I exist” was his only first principle.

IN

use the same theological style towards this injured gentleman. Need one be surprized that Calvin, who held such frightful doctrines about Devils, Lib. I. Chap. 13. Sect. 13, should be for burning one, when he got him in his clutches?

† Locke’s Conduct of the Understanding. Sect. XII.

IN a fair course of reasoning, he inferred the existence of a first cause, an eternal, original, independent, and necessarily existent Being, possessed of infinite power, wisdom and goodness, the Creator of all worlds and Father of all beings.* “Towards such a Being, said he, can I help feeling respect the most sincere? Here he laid a foundation for religion, which consists in the love and worship of God.”

It may be thought, perhaps, that Academicus went a long way to find a little truth. This I know was frequently objected to him. But he used to reply, “I will take nothing for granted. I will not allow myself to say, I believe what I have not thoroughly examined, but by a steady process of inquiry, I wish to know, which of all the religions in the world is most correspondent to the character of God? and the nature of man?”

He weighed them all like a philosopher and an historian, and after having long held the scale with an impartial hand, the balance turned in favour of christianity. I saw Academicus embrace the NEW TESTAMENT, and heard him exclaim, “Thou art an inestimable treasure!”

“I FIND, continued he, different theologians from this one book have extracted different systems. I will lay them all aside, and from the NEW TESTAMENT itself collect, as far as I am able, the doctrines of truth.” A true genius, if he follow the direction of his own superior talents, will admit few restraints, and of all characters

* Clarke's Attributes. Prop. III. Grotius de Ver. Religionis Christ, Lib, I.

ters in the world is the most unmanageable and unsubmissive. — Academicus then was somewhat detained by a notion, that “where we have no ideas, and perceive not their agreement, or disagreement, whatever fancies we may indulge, we have no knowledge, and whatever assent we may yield, we have no faith.” Agreeably to those notions he wished to examine all the christian doctrines.†

UNFORTUNATE young philosopher! most sincerely did I pity thee. Thy mind was but on the edge of inquiry, thou wast but just beginning to ask, “What is Truth?” And behold! Thou wast presented, when called on to take orders, with an ancient system of 39 articles, containing a prodigious number of metaphysical, theological, political, and historical propositions, to be subscribed in the “literal and grammatical sense,” in which almost every christian doctrine was settled, or pretended to be settled; with 141 cruel canons to suppress inquiry, to bring conscience under discipline, and to correct it, if unruly; three creeds, orthodox, and heterodox, antiquated, unintelligible, and contradictory, and with a routine of prayers, the remains of a romish missal, after which thou, a protestant divine, wert to address thy Maker! Thou wast presented, Academicus, with all these; for whoever subscribes the 39 articles does in fact subscribe them all.

MOST unfortunate young philosopher, most sincerely did I pity thee! Nor am I here merely indulging my fancy
or

† ——— Καὶ φραζέτω ἕκαστα
 Ἡγεῖται γὰρ τὴν ἐκείνου καθυπερθεὶς ἀρετὴν. τὴν
 οὐκ Pythag. Χρυσὴ ἐπη: V. 68, 69.

or speaking the language of scorn. Many have I known, who have groaned over the misery of their situation, for whom I have, in secret, dropped the tear of the most unaffected concern. Some have sighed and subscribed; others, with inclinations to the ministry, have relinquished them; some, of easy circumstances, have declined every employment in the church; while others have resigned their preferments, and betaken themselves to civil employments.

Do you ask, reader, Whether Academicus was affected with scruples, and brought into difficulties? Whether he surmounted them, got his testimonials signed, held a curacy, became a rector, and, at length, a dignitary in the church? This is all a secret. My Inquiry intermeddles not with his subsequent history. We shook hands, and parted at the church porch.

BUT let me ask philosophers, that is, men of right reason. Was this philosophical? Here was a young man of superior talents, just beginning to examine the doctrines of THE TEACHER OF TRUTH, and who thought with Luther, that a christian minister's motto should be, Pray seriously, turn over the sacred volumes attentively, and always continue a scholar.† — In such circumstances, Was it reasonable to demand such a Subscription, as the present? In proportion to the extent of the formulary, Might not native ingenuousness be interrupted, and the original force of the faculties receive a curb? Might not that order, which the various operations of the mind should maintain,

† *Biblia serio evolvit, orat sedulo, et semper manet discipulus.*

maintain, to arrive at knowledge, be broken in upon, and an obstructing medium be presented, which might keep the light of truth from entering?

SUPPOSE it granted, that our public confession be, in the main, the faith of "a true christian man?" Is the true christian man never to make advances in knowlege? Must his boundaries be prescribed him? But I ask again, Were the compilers of the 39 articles infallible? The governors of the church will not venture to affirm this. May not some of the doctrines, then, be false? Do not the best informed of the clergy believe many of them are so? And I hope to be able to prove, that many of them are grossly false. And will any philosophical divine undertake to shew, that the most probable way for the understanding to arrive at truth, is, for the hand to subscribe falsehood?

C H A P. VI.

Can we believe Mysteries?

yes

I HAVE hinted above, that we cannot understand, and, consequently, cannot believe mysteries, meaning by that term, doctrines incomprehensible, or contradictory. For a distinction is to be made between the "mysteries of christianity."

christianity," and the "mysteries of divines: which I shall make in the words of that excellent christian philosopher, the "wise and modest Abauzit."*

I. THE sacred pen-men gave the name of "mystery" to those truths, which revelation discovers to us, and which would have been unknown to men, had they enjoyed only the guidance of reason. Thus the doctrine of the vocation of the Gentiles to the privileges of the gospel is called a "mystery," because before Jesus Christ had commanded his apostles to preach the gospel throughout the whole world, this design, which God had formed of manifesting himself to all men, was a thing unknown, a thing concealed. In the same sense it is, that St. Paul, informing the christians, that all mankind shall not be dead, when Jesus Christ shall descend to judge the world, calls this doctrine a "mystery," because that was a particular circumstance, with regard to the last judgment, which mankind had been ignorant of till that time: it had been a thing concealed from them, till the time St. Paul informed them of it. It is in this sense that the word

* Abauzit was born at Uzes, but found an asylum at Geneva. He was allowed to possess as great a variety of knowledge, as any man of his time. He was known to the most eminent divines, philosophers, and mathematicians in Europe, particularly Sir Isaac Newton. Several corrected errors in their works from hints communicated by Abauzit, among whom was Sir Isaac Newton. "He did not exhibit his wisdom in books, but displayed it in his life." But of some of the greatest men, who lived in his time, it was sufficient praise to say, "He was the friend of the wise Abauzit." See his Life prefixed to his Miscellanies, by Dr. Harwood.

word "mystery" is most frequently employed in the New Testament.

II. THE name of "mystery" is also given to those doctrines of religion, which acquaint us but imperfectly with those subjects, which they present to our minds, which only communicate to us insufficient ideas. It is in this sense, that one may say, that the conduct of providence is a "mystery;" because, though we know various things concerning the manner, in which God governs this universe, we are very far from knowing all the rules, which it observes in this great regard.

III. One gives the name of "mystery" to what is unknown and obscure to us in the things that relate to religion. We do not know, for example, in what time God will make his gospel known to those nations, which hitherto have been plunged in the darkness of paganism; this we say is to us a "mystery."

IV. The word "mystery" is sometimes employed to denote in general the truths of religion. It seems even that the scriptures sometimes make use of it in this sense. Thus Christ said to his disciples, "to you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," that is, to know the truths of my gospel, which remain concealed from the rest of mankind. "Let every one," says St. Paul, "regard us, as stewards of the mysteries of Christ," meaning of those truths, which J. Christ, came to teach men, and of which the greatest part of men are ignorant.

ABAUZIT adds, "Those things which are unknown to us, make no parts of religion. They have not been revealed to us. Since they continue to be unknown and concealed from us, they constitute no part of the revelation, which hath been granted us: they ought not, they cannot be the objects of our faith:" and for this plain reason, whatever is concealed from us, we have no ideas of.*

BUT "divines give the name of mystery to certain doctrines, which reason, they say, cannot comprehend, and which are even contradictory."

So that this word has been refined by reverend chymists, as quite to have lost its original appearance, and is presented to us under a different form: indeed it assumes a variety of shapes, yet behold it never alters. Is an object black? You are to believe it is white? Is it white? You are to believe it is black: and then, perhaps, that it is neither black nor white, and yet that it is both. To be more accurate; What, if we should say, a theological mystery is something so dark, that we cannot understand it, something so high, that we cannot see it, yet something so important, that without evidence, yea contrary to evidence, we must believe it, and without our eyes we must swear, lo! We see? Some have thought if to the terms absurd, irrational, contradictory, you even add the term blasphemous, the definition will be more accurate,

* Abauzit's Miscellanies. On Mysteries in Religion. Published by Dr. Harwood, printed for Becket, Strand. See also a Sermon of Dr. Foster's on Mysteries. Vol. I,

accurate, though it may not, perhaps, fall so soft on a clerical ear.

For example, a priest mumbles these words, "This is my body"† over a little bread and wine — Instantly it becomes the flesh, and blood, and bones of Jesus! Yea though a thousand communicants, at the same time, and in a thousand different places on the globe, eat this extraordinary wafer, each of these thousand communicants would eat the whole body, and drink the whole blood of Jesus!§ The word of the priest changes the substance of the bread into the whole body of Christ, which too, they acknowledge, had ascended into heaven.

How is this done? This is all concealed. It is a mystery. The Church of England (agreeing with the doctrine of the Lutheran Church) alters, but I think by no means improves the mystery. We eat bread, indeed, and drink wine; but yet the "body and blood of Christ are verily, and indeed taken, and received by the faithful in the Lord's supper." In the office for the celebration of this supper, these are called HOLY MYSTERIES. Here the word of the priest changes one substance into two. The romish doctor calls his mystery transubstantiation; the lutheran terms his consubstantiation. Yet both are alike mysteries.

The church of England tells me, There is but one self-existent Being; that he is, to use the words of Alstedius,

† Hocce corpus est meum.

§ Many celebrated protestant divines note these circumstances, yet professed doctrines equally incomprehensible!

dius, "ipfa unitas, unity itself," "without parts;" and in the very next proposition, she tells me, "That in this one Being, without parts, there be three persons, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, yet but one God. How can this be? It is a mystery. Further, I am told, That Jesus Christ is the self-existent God, and therefore "without passions," consequently, could not suffer; I am again told, that Jesus Christ did suffer death, and lay in the grave three days, yet, that the self-existent God, whom Jesus Christ is declared to be, did not die." These, and many like them, have been called "The Fundamentals, the mysteries of christianity." Many "mysteries" are contained in the 39 articles.

LET me here introduce Academicus again. He was told, he could not understand these mysteries, yet he was asked for faith; yea, they told him to lay aside his reason, and then to believe.† Was not this to ask him to see without eye-sight?

ACADEMICUS found it impossible to reconcile such practice to any principle of his philosophy. Besides, do but think for a moment. These sublime mysteries were the

† This, I confess, says Bishop Beveridge, is a mystery which I cannot possibly conceive, yet it is a truth, which I can easily believe; yea therefore it is true, that I can easily believe it, because it is so high, that I cannot possibly conceive it. Vid. his *Private Thoughts*, Art. III. The unity in trinity, he calls the mystery of mysteries! In like manner Bishop Hurd speaks of certain mysteries, at which "reason stands aghast, and faith itself is half confounded." Vid. *Priestley's Corruptions of Christianity*. Vol. II. General Conclusion. See also Mr. Hooker,

the deductions of profound doctors, after many metaphysical excursions, and theological labours, the last efforts of supereraphical skill, the "very marrow of truth!" Was it philosophical to expect a young inquirer to be as eagle-eyed, as our hardy veterans in the service of theology? Surely, oh, ye divines and philosophers! This was an awkward time to propose mysteries to poor Academicus.

NOR do I think the following considerations wholly foreign to the present question, nor unworthy of our attention: on comparing the testimonies of divines, at different periods, about these mysterious points, it appears, that some of the most eminent fairly dropt mysteries, and in the maturity of their judgement, with the sacred scriptures in their hands, with an increase of light and knowlege, which broke into their minds by a close investigation of truth, with immortality full in view, and in prospect of giving an account of themselves to God, they died in the arms of common sense, and Revelation;*

having

* It was not peculiar to Courayer, and Whitby to leave the track of Orthodoxy, after they had distinguished themselves by their writings in its favour. There are not two names of greater note among the dissenters, than Doddridge and Watts: they were learned, pious, and useful men. From what the latter has said in his Lectures (Prop. 128. p. 392.) as quoted by Dr. Priestley, it should seem, he was only, at the close of life, what Dr. Priestley calls a qualified Trinitarian, that is, a Sabellian. General View of the Argument, for the Unity of God. It is well known too, that Dr. Watts gave up the "orthodox" doctrine of the Trinity, notwithstanding his zeal for it, prior to the publication of an Appeal to a Turk, or an Indian about the Athanasian doctrine of the Trinity, written by Mr. Martin Tomkyns, Memoirs of the life of Whiston, P. 251. Those who have lately stood forth the open asserters of the unity of God, were once, most of them, strict Trinitarians.

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having lived under the credit of orthodoxy, they, at length, died under the odium of heresy.

ALL these things considered, where, oh! ye divines and philosophers, is the reasonableness of our present Subscription? It is an insult to a man of genius. Had the same conduct been pursued towards the polite arts, which has been practiced, towards theology, surely their dignity must have been lessened, and their progress retarded!

GREAT then are the evils, which Subscription will cause on the operations of a more active mind; nor will their influence be more favourable to one less vigorous.

The following anecdote deserves observation. Archbishop Tillotson writes to Bishop Burnet in 1694, upon reading his Exposition of the 39 Articles thus,

"In the article of the Trinity, you have said all that I think can be said upon 'so obscure and difficult an argument.' The Socinians have just now published an answer to us all; but I have not had a sight of it. The account given of Athanasius's Creed, seems to me no wise satisfactory: I wish we were well rid of it." Life of Tillotson by Birch, as quoted by Mr. Lindsey, in his *Vindiciæ Priestleianæ*. pag. 16.

It were much to be wished, that all public teachers, who have led mankind into errors, would, on conviction of their mistakes, take some means of undeceiving them: and thus, leave the world in possession of their "Last Thoughts." A late eminently learned prelate, on presenting a celebrated publication to the world, believed the Arian opinion concerning Christ, but in the last edition of his book, having embraced the Socinian notion, those texts, which had been expounded agreeably to the Arian hypothesis in the former editions, are made to speak a sense, agreeing with the Socinian: a conduct, worthy of a christian bishop, and deserving imitation!

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gorous. The mind of man, like human nature in general, amid all its various directions, possesses some uniformity of character, its exercises indeed are not equally lively in all, yet let it but think, and there will be a similarity in its movements. Now, if a person have acquired no habit of thinking, if he have no art in comparing different ideas together, and investigating the reason of things, if when a proposition be fairly stated, he be capable neither of establishing its truth, or of evincing its falsehood, it is impossible, philosophically speaking, he should believe 39 articles. A faith, which constitutes a believer, can only be the effect of evidence. There are, indeed, some truths, which the former may believe, because he sees the evidence, on which they depend, which yet the latter will not be able to believe, because he cannot perceive that evidence. And as a superior understanding should not be confined within limits too narrow, — so neither should a weak capacity be constrained to undertakings too arduous: “A bow too much bent will be broken.” I shall presently have occasion to remark, that the doctrines of original sin, absolute predestination, and a trinity in unity, are not the doctrines of the Sacred Scriptures, nor of the first ages of christianity, but the refinements of theologians. I will, however, out of courtesy, call them sublime mysteries: but then should they not be proposed to sublime geniuses? But what shall we say to the other poor fellow, my amiable friend Urbanus? He had nothing sublime about him: and should you have fed him on theology, till he were grey, he would never have had strength

strength enough to have attained this knowlege. He could pay a pretty compliment, say a smart thing, or pen a sonnet; but, yet, Urbanus was not a sublime genius.

I MUST beg the reader's patience, while I drop another hint on the subject of "mysteries."

It deserves, then, to be noted, that, on the principles of the church, there are not only mysterious doctrines, but mysterious promises, and mysterious precepts: and if so, it will follow, that there are promises, which offer us nothing, and precepts, which command us to do nothing. A "mystery" being something concealed, from which, therefore, no ideas can be collected, and nothing be known.

IN the 17th article we are told, "We must receive God's promises in such wise, as they be generally set forth in Holy Scripture, and in our doings that will of God is to be followed, which we have expressly declared to us in the word of God." So far there is no "mystery." The promises and precepts are plain, at least, I think so.

BUT, unfortunately, on the principles of the reformed churches, "curious and carnal persons, without the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his Spirit, can neither understand the will of Christ, or do works pleasant to God. We have no power to do good works, without the grace of Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will."* "With which excellent benefit none are endued,

* Art. XVII.

endued, but those, who are called according to God's purpose by his Spirit working in due season:" and this none have, but those, "whom by his council, secret to us, he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, to be delivered from God's curse and damnation." None but these can "obey the calling, or walk religiously in good works;" nor even they, till "they feel in themselves, the workings of the Spirit of Christ."† This paragraph, taken in connection with the preceding, forms a "mystery."

FOR, let a revelation be laid before me, let reason be capable of perceiving the evidence of its divinity, let me connect the ideas in the propositions proposed to my belief, let me understand the precepts recommended to my practice, let me be accessible to the motives derived from its promises, and in proportion to the clearness of my perceptions, and the strength of those motives, good works will necessarily follow. If the motives be strong and powerful, obedience will be lively and active; if they be weak and imperfect, obedience will be feeble and ineffective: for actions as regularly follow motives, as any effect proceeds, by the laws of mechanism, from its cause.‡ But, alas! What is to be done with graceless persons, "who have not the Spirit?" With them the powers of reason are vain, and the strongest motives ineffective. None are "in the secret," but those, who have the Spirit.

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† Art. XVII.

‡ Hartley's Observations on Man. Vol. I. page 500, On the Mechanism of the Human Mind.

GOOD men are not always aware of the tendency of their own principles. For it is obvious to remark, that mysterious doctrines, and precepts, are too often connected with mysterious practice. || Hence, at the Reformation, arose the Gospellers, a kind of Antinomians, who turned the grace of God to wantonness.† Mystics are often good men; but “mystery” has been too often the parent of knavery.

REMARKS of this kind, however, do not properly belong to this part of my subject.—But I still ask, What is a subscriber to do, in the case of “mysteries?” Should he listen to Patronus, who, perhaps, would tell him, that in the same manner, as he might safely believe an article to be true, because the Reformers believed it, he may also suppose himself to be under the guidance of the “Spirit,” because the Reformers thought they were? Or should he rather adopt the language of the holy saint Theresa, (so much admired by good Abbé de la Trappe) who to a girl, that said, she would bring her Bible to the convent, replied, “We want neither you nor your Bible, we are poor ignorant souls, who know only how to spin and obey.”*

SUCH saints are in possession of the shortest answer to the question,

Can we believe Mysteries?

CHAP.

|| Foster's Sermon, ut sup.

† Burnet's Hist. of the Reformation. Part. II.

* Abauzit's Miscellanies. Letter to a Lady at Dijon, page 64.

C H A P. VII.

On the Imperfections of the present Establishment.

PERHAPS an attention to the circumstances of our ecclesiastical establishment may also throw light on the present question.

THE great Author of nature, we allow, is absolutely perfect, and that infinite wisdom and power constituting an essential part of his character, affect all his actions. His works, therefore, are all perfect, that is, they fully answer the original intention of their Author, in the respective ranks, which they hold, and the various uses, which they answer, in the material, or intellectual world. Their perfection too was instantaneous: and not being derived from gradual improvement, but carried at once to the summit of excellence, required no subsequent revival. God said, "Let there be light, and there was light, and God saw every thing, that he had made, and behold, it was very good." But human nature being prone to imperfection, all its schemes and contrivances are comparatively ineffective, and it arrives at absolute perfection in nothing. All its little excellencies it gains by partial discoveries, and gradual improvement.*

* See Hooker's Eccles. Polity,

It was natural, we will say, when the polite arts revived in Europe, two hundred years ago, that the popular religion should also undergo a public examination. The imperfection of former systems of church policy becoming notorious, it was also natural, to inquire after a system, divested of ancient errors, and more adapted to that enlightened period. This was all natural.

YET, if the minds of men had been pre-occupied by no ancient corruptions, if our Reformers had sat down to the scriptures pure and uncorrupted, and formed a plan of church discipline original and new, had they been men of the greatest conduct and capacity, possessed of all the powers of criticism, and directed by all the ingenuofness of christian simplicity; in a word, had they been as unprejudiced, as learned, as sincere, and as unsophisticated, as we can possibly conceive, and as I am ready to believe they were, yet was it natural, even then, to suppose, that a translation of the scriptures, and a scheme of church policy, would have been exhibited to mankind, incapable of future improvement? This may not be supposed, perfection was not made for man.

BUT, in the present case, where the minds of men had been pre-possessed by deep-rooted prejudices, where ignorance, superstition, bigotry, priest-craft, and worldly policy, had been tyrannizing over the consciences of men for ages, where the hands, that reformed, were under the immediate direction of arms, still stronger their own, where the whole work of Reformation was made to carry an appearance, best suited to the views of princes, and humouring the darling prejudices of the nation, || and where

|| See Burnet's Hist. of the Reign of Elizabeth.

where even Reformers themselves were but just emerging from popish darkness; in such circumstances, what conduct can be more irrational than that, which implies, the Reformation was a finished draught? The arts and sciences have not laboured under those difficulties, which have retarded the cultivation of scriptural theology; and yet, have they not received considerable improvement, and the most important discoveries been made, since the æra of the Reformation?

It has been observed, that there is a circulation of opinions, in a course of years.† In the 13th century the productions of that sage, who had given laws to men of literature for ages, were burnt at Paris, and fifty years after, they were revived by Thomas Aquinas. Aristotle's metaphysics and politics have been once more discarded. A sound philosophy has taken its seat in our schools of literature, and liberal systems of civil government have enlightened many European states. Andreas Cifalpinus, Paulus Sarpus, and Servetus were acquainted with the circulation of the blood, and a book was written in its defence, many years ago, by an Englishman. The opinion was, however, buried, till revived by the famous Harvey. Years ago, there was a Pythagoras, a Thales, a Homer and a Longinus. But the discoveries of philosophy, the charms of poesy, and the refinements of criticism lay neglected, during the superstition of the dark ages.

BUT, since the Reformation, we have had Bacons, Boyles, Newtons, Lockes, Hartleys; Miltons, Clarkes and Bentleys;

† Baker's Reflections on Learning.

Bentleys; we have had Boerhaaves, and Linnæuses, and even Shakspears, and Garricks—Men of genius have been suffered to walk at large through the fields of human science, unshackled by Subscriptions, and unawed by oaths.

BUT hear it, ye sons of science! Our established system of theology continues unreformed, unimproved, and, except for the worse, unaltered.* I called it our established system, but some will think, I do it too much honour. They call it a mere farrago. What was the popish religion, say they, but a strange compound of Roman, of Grecian, of Jewish, and Egyptian ceremonies? An enemy collected tares from every quarter, and scattered them in the romish church: the harvest was plenteous; and the Reformers had the gleaning. Our priests, our habits, our rites, our ceremonies, our canons, our very prayers, and most of our doctrines, were derived from that corrupt source. Both churches are founded on the same principles, and animated by the same spirit.† Both alike receive their importance from worldly pomp, and solicit the protection of the civil power. All this has been acknowledged by many sensible episcopal writers, and others, while they have been attacking the citadel of popery, have, unwarily, undermined their own constitution.‖ Presbyterians, and Independants,

* Alludes to the Act of Uniformity, and Sacramental Test-Law in Charles the Second's reign, and the Canons enjoined by James the First.—Some alterations made in the liturgy are too inconsiderable, to be mentioned.

‖ See particularly the last Sermon of Bishop Hurd's on Prophecy. Vol. II.

† There is a most judicious Tract, written by a German
O unitarian

dependants, Baptists and Quakers, Moravians and Sardinians, and Catholics themselves, have all stood by and said with a smile, "Sport not too freely with the infirmities of thy neighbours, be not too indulgent to thine own imperfections."

— Quid rides? Mutato nomine, de te Fabula narratur.

I ASK, Where is the consistency of subscribing, in the year 1789, to the popish farrago, according to honest Latimer to the mingle mangle * of 1552? Inconsistent as the conduct of the Reformers was, in introducing uniformity, and in professing, at the same time, a desire for future improvement, yet a wish they certainly did indulge, that men would arise in future ages to carry on the work, which they had begun. But, alas! — "We have left the Minster where we found it."

C H A P.

unitarian Baptist, afterwards principal of the University at Racow in Poland, entitled, *Brevis Discussio*, in which it is shewn, that all the reformed churches, those at least, united by the Harmony, were founded on the same principles, as the catholic. The justice of his remarks is remarkably exemplified in the English Church. Our countryman, Mr. Biddle, translated this excellent piece into English. See a Review of the Life, Character, and Writings of Mr. Biddle, by Mr. Toulmin.

* Every body knows Bishop Latimer's homely manner of speaking of the Reformation, at the close of a Sermon preached before Edward the Sixth, "It was yet, he said, but a mingle mangle, and hodge-potch, I cannot tell what, says he, partly popery, and partly true religion, mingled together. They say in my country, when they call their hogs to the swine-trough, Come to the mingle mangle, Come, purs, come. Even so do they make mingle mangle of the Gospel." Gilpin's Life of Bishop Latimer, page 111.

It

C H A P. VIII.

Whether, in proportion to Improvements in Religious Sentiment, Alterations should not be made in the Laws? This Question illustrated by Examples, from Plato, Montesquieu, Beccaria, Paley, Hooker and Locke. The consequence of retaining the same Laws, after a state of Religious Improvement.

“**M**EN are influenced, says Montesquieu, by various causes, by the climate, the religion, the laws, the maxims of government, by precedents, morals, and customs; from whence is formed a general spirit, which takes its rise from these.”†

THERE

It was owing to this similarity of features, that the pope on being presented with Mr. Hooker's book, made use of some such expression as the following, “This book will stand, when God shall burn up the globe.” See Hooker's Life prefixed to his Ecclesiastical Polity. I quote from memory, the edition which now lies before me, not having his Life. Hence too it was, that the Pope's nuncio was authorized to confirm the Service-book, and Bonner said, “If they sup our broth, they will soon eat our beef.” See Pierce's Vindication of the Non-conformists, Part I. p. 50,

† Liv. XIX, Cap, IV.

THERE should always be an agreement between the laws, and the customs, manners, and turn of thinking in a nation: for as the customs, manners and opinions of a people will be formed from their laws, so their laws should be rectified by their prevailing manners, and opinions. The ill-consequences of a contrary policy are soon felt. For a people soon experience, that there may be not only a tyranny proceeding from the oppressions of government, as such, but from the establishment of things, shocking to the turn of thought, and inconsistent with the ideas of a nation. ||

THE sentiments, however, of a nation on any particular grievances cannot be collected from the complaints of a single sect, For each party, through prejudices, and partialities, may draw a picture of wrongs, which do not really exist: and indeed, the benefit of the public may, sometimes, justify the inconveniencies of individuals. Nor, again, can the sentiments of a people be expressed by one branch of the legislature, independant of the other. In a government, where the legislature is composed of different branches, there may exist among them a mutual jealousy, one part may wish to exalt its claims on the ruins of another, and the complaints of any one may not express the "general spirit:" this can only be ascertained by the voice of the majority. Now, that there are defects in our establishment, no body will deny. But I design to ask, Whether they be not of such a nature,

|| Il y a deux sortes de tyrannie; une réelle, qui consiste dans la violence du gouvernement; et une d'opinion, qui se sentir lorsque ceux qui gouverne établissent des choses, qui choquent la maniere de penser d'une nation. Montesquieu, ut supra. Liv. XIX. Cap. III.

nature, as to justify me in saying, they oppose the general spirit, the turn of thought, that prevails at present in the nation.

I WILL here run over a few particulars.

The enormous power, lodged in the civil magistrate, by the act of supremacy, when drawn at full length, and exhibited in practice, brought tears, it is well known, in the eyes of the gentle Edward. The authority also claimed in it, seemed so near a-kin to that challenged by the Pope, that the clergy opposed its passing, without this clause, "so far as is agreeable to the laws of Christ," though afterwards omitted.* Nor did the title of "supreme head" please even Elizabeth herself, who thought, "that it imported a power, which Christ only had over the church."† I pass by the history of the royal declaration, prefixed to the articles.‖ But I cannot help remarking, that King William was well aware of the narrowness of our establishment, that ecclesiastical commissioners were actually appointed to review the articles, and to widen the doors of the church. There is reason also to believe, that George the First, and George the Second both saw the defects of the present church forms, and were well inclined to a reformation.‡

To

* Priestley's Hist. of the Corruptions of Christianity. Vol. II. page 348.

† Hist. of the Reformation, Part II. page 376.

‖ See the Confessional, and Toplady's Historic Proof of Calvinism of the Church of England.

‡ "As these great personages had thoughts of advancing Dr. Clarke to the highest dignity in the church, it is probable,

To the bill, whose object was to keep the civil offices still guarded by a sacramental test, (for the abolition of which so many considerations, drawn from the truest policy loudly call,) King William, and several members of parliament were very ill disposed, and there is extant a remarkable protest of several noble Lords, expressed in the strongest terms of disapprobation. In the reign of Elizabeth, several bills were brought into the House of Commons for improving the form, and in Charles the Second's, schemes were pursued by them, for softening the spirit of the church.

I HAVE already hinted, that the Reformation was unfinished, even in the judgement of the Reformers. I add, that they all expressed a disapprobation of certain ceremonies and habits. This is true, indeed, not only of Hooper, Rogers, Latimer, Martyr and Bucer, but even of Cranmer and Ridley themselves, before their death. ||

Fox

hable, that of themselves, they would have had no objection to such alterations in the liturgy, as he was earnest, and solicitous to introduce." *Vindiciæ Priestleianæ*, page 10. See also Burnet's Hist. of the Reformation. Part III. Preface, page 30. Clarke refused the archbishopric of Canterbury, rather than submit to the task of imposing Subscription, according to canon 36.

|| Hooper was suspended, and even imprisoned for refusing the habits. Latimer on their pulling off his surplice at his degradation said ludicrously, "Now I can make no more holy water." Fox. Vol. III. page 174. The rest also considered them, "mere relicks, of popery," and exercised their drollery on them. Cranmer on their taking off his ecclesiastical habit at his degradation said, "All this needeth not: I had myself done with this years ago." Fox. page 665. An ingenious and learned writer has preserved

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Fox also was of the same judgement: and the objections of the Puritans, properly so called, are too considerable to pass unnoticed. For they occurred to them prior to any educational prejudices, or to their settling at Geneva, antecedent to any idea of separation, while they were within the bosom of the church. Mr. George Cranmer, a churchman, observes, that, "at the first, the greatest part of the learned of the land were either eagerly affected, or favourably inclined that way."|| And there have been no less than seven conferences entered into for the purpose of reformation.

SINCE the Revolution very loud complaints, in which the Dissenters have had little share, have been made by ecclesiastics themselves, many of whom groan over Subscription, as an intolerable yoke. Tillotson, Burnet, Patrick, Tennison, Hoadley, and no less than five, who are now on the bench, have endeavoured to have defects remedied, and I cannot help remarking the sad dilemma into which a certain bishop was brought, when the same hand, which wrote the History of the Reformation, and of his Own Times, was forced into the service of writing an Exposition of the 39 Articles.* Several of our first literary characters have openly avowed their disbelief of the doctrinal articles; we have also had Protestant Reconcilers, and Confessionals; "Free and candid Disquisitions,

a noble speech, made in the convocation, which sat May 23, 1604, by the Bishop of saint David's, against the use of the cross. Pierce's Vindication of the Dissenters. Part I. page 158. These may appear trifling circumstances, I mention them, to shew the spirit of those times.

|| See a Letter to Mr. Hooker, prefixed to his Ecclesiastical Polity, by Mr. George Cranmer,

* See the Confessional, Chap. IV.

Disquisitions, drawn up by persons of distinguished learning, both from among the laity, and the clergy, addressed to the governing powers both in church and state," and in succession to them, we have had other learned church-men petitioning the legislature. Moreover, attempts have been made by very respectable characters for the abolishment of Subscription in one of our Universities, and a disbelief of many of the articles is almost universal among the inferior clergy: even the party, strongly attached to its doctrines, has shewn a hearty disaffection to its discipline, and a more unmanageable circumstance still, the very men, who have been for healing the breaches of our Zion, by their apologies for Subscription, whatever they thought of the discipline of the church, disbelieved many of its doctrines. ||

OF late years too the voice of Unitarians has sounded in the land, and is likely to grow stronger, and stronger. The weight also which the number, the learning, and virtue of the Dissenters throw into the scale is very considerable, which I shall examine more at large in another place. But the facts already alleged prove, that there is "a secret something" in the church, wherever the defect lie, which is shocking to the "general spirits" of the times.

CHRISTI-

|| I here suppose, what I think very easy to prove, that the articles are calvinistic. Hooker, Rogers, Beveridge, were of this judgement, and since them, Toplady and some of the Methodists. But those writers, who at present rule the taste of the clergy, were of a contrary persuasion. Nichols, Calamy, Burnet, Waterland, Warburton, &c. were Arminians; and that Sherlock, who with so ill a grace pleaded against the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, and was so ably refuted by Bishop Hoadley, was not a sound Calvinist, see Anti-Sozzo,

"CHRISTIANITY ought not to perish for want of ministers, churches, and instruction.†" — Would this happen, if obsolete laws were repealed, and a provision, more agreeable to the taste of the age, made for the clergy? Tithes, first established by Charlemagne in the ninth century, were with great difficulty admitted by the ecclesiastical law, and have, ever since, been a heavy burden on Christendom. "The common people are hardly capable of being induced by examples to give up their own interest:" and, amid the suspicions of the people, can you ensure the comfort of the priest? To see the grievance of tithes, I do not send you to listen to the complaints of that part of the flock, who have leaped the fence, and are feeding, you will say, in forbidden pastures: What confusion do they cause, between shepherd and flock, who, surely, ought to live in peace within the same fold! ||

My present argument does not lead me to inquire into the expediency of an establishment, or how far the legislature has any original pretensions to interfere in matters of religion, nor yet, whether the next step in reformation may lead to a total demolition of our establishment, or whether, like what is related of that fabulous bird, ‡ a new establishment shall arise out of the ruins of the present, as that did from one preceding it.

ALL religious establishments, I am persuaded, have within them the seeds of death: they are composed of the

† Montesquieu. || See a sensible hint on tithes in Friend's Thoughts on Subscription, p. 16. 2d edit.

‡ Vid. Clement. Epist. ad Corinth. Inter Patr. Apost. page 105. edit. Russel.

the jarring elements of human passions, have traded in human souls, and invaded the liberties of nations. § But passing considerations of this kind, I maintain, that they are the work of the legislature, and those evils which the laws have introduced, it is the business of the laws to remedy. “Let them leave us, as we are, said a gentleman, of a particular nation, and nature will repair whatever is amiss.”† This is true of those manners and customs, which are influenced by the prevailing taste and character of a people: it is also true, that the natural justice of man, and prerogative may remove some inconveniences, and supply some defects. But erroneous opinions, long established by law, and ruinous maxims, under the shelter of law, formed into precedents and customs, and bound on the conscience by the solemn obligation of oaths, require the correcting hand of the legislature, and from that quarter only can obtain a safe and complete cure.

As these hints relate to the alteration of an established religion, I beg the reader to keep in mind, that I speak not of the practice of an individual, whether a Tyrant or a Reformer, who is for engrafting new laws on an ancient religion, nor yet of many individuals for thirty may be Tyrants, as well as one. I speak of correcting the spirit of ancient laws, which the voice of a nation declares, burdensome, oppressive, unnatural. In the former case the interest of individuals, only is concerned, whose exclusive pretensions are always ill-founded; in the latter, that of the community, whose just claims are the measure of law.

PLATO,

§ See Hartley's *Observations on Man*, Vol. II. Sect. II.

† Montesquieu. *De l'Esprit des Loix*, Liv. XIX. Cap. VI.

PLATO thought Rhadamanthus to be admired for that course in the administration of justice, which he established. He saw that the men of those times clearly believed the existence of Gods, many of that age proceeding from them, of which number, according to report, he was one. He, therefore, thought it necessary to commit the decision of justice to the Gods, which he did, by putting both parties to their oath: a quick and safe way, when an oath was reckoned a sacred thing. But now, continues Plato, when we acknowledge, that one part of mankind do not suppose, that there any Gods, others imagine, that they pay no regard to us, and the most and the vilest entertain an opinion, that they can procure their favour by a few offerings, and services, and may therefore commit any crimes with impunity, Rhadamanthus's method of administering justice would not be proper. For men's opinions concerning the Gods changing, the laws also should change.* Montesquieu has many similar remarks.

A PRACTICE, not corresponding to this maxim, and operating to a great extent, would ruin the best government in the world. For a nation, then, must either admit this dangerous position, that its laws rest ultimately on some ancient decisions, allowing no improvement, and take their weight, not from a people now uniting in society; or otherwise, the imperfection of the laws must introduce vagueness, and the judge determine their meaning. The excellent Beccaria remarks, "There is nothing more dangerous than this common maxim, "The Spirit

* Μεταβεβληκυιων ουν των περι Θεω δοξων εν τοις ανθρωποις, μεταβαλλειν δε και της νομης. Plato de Leg. Lib. XII.

spirit of the laws is to be considered."† So far as there is a necessity to explain away the letter of the law, government has no security. This must happen where obsolete laws continue unrepealed.

THESE remarks may seem to belong more properly to the next Part of this work. But from what follows, it will appear to be immediately connected with this. For, the policy of our state is interwoven with religious opinions. Admitting then for the sake of argument, that human laws should interfere in religion, or at least, arguing from the fact, that they have interfered, I contend that laws, proper 200 years ago, or supposing them proper, can have no propriety in 1589, because, in the leizure of 200 years, considerable defects have been detected in our present church forms, because the ecclesiastical rule of governing the human understanding by Subscription, has proved deficient, because great advances have been made in religious knowlege, in a word, because an increase of light in the nation has damaged the whole system, supported by Subscription: and legislators, politicians, and philosophers all agree, "That a bad practice should be abolished."* What must otherwise be the consequence? I blush to utter it, but, if I had a power equal to my wishes, I would proclaim it to the whole world: popular errors, still remaining established by law, will continue to receive public encouragement, and TRUTH be reckoned a disgrace. Weak men, who think they can govern mankind, bad men, who will dare to deceive them, and good men, still in bondage to little prejudices,

† Essay on Crimes and Punishments. Chap. IV,

* Malus usus abolendus est.

prejudices, or not being capable from the drowfiness of false devotion, to strike into the less trodden path of free inquiry, will have the public smile, and receive the compliment of orthodoxy. — But who, think you, will be the heretics and schismatics? Here again I blush for orthodoxy.

YE Miltons, ye Newtons, ye Lockes, ye Clarkes, ye Hartleys, ye Whistons, and Biddles! Ye Fosters, Lardners, Lelands, Emlyns and Taylors! Ye all shall be among orthodox English churches, || what those illustrious foreigners Socinus, Crellius, and Abauzit were among foreign. — Ye shall be heretics and schismatics! Ye dared to disclaim the doctrine, or the discipline of orthodox churches. Whence did this happen? Ye were possessed of superior talents, ye had enriched your understandings with all the treasures of human science, and with pious dispositions, disinterested views, and philosophical accuracy, ye had studied the sacred Scriptures; yet ye all departed from our established standards of orthodoxy; I maintain, on the principles of our establishment, ye were all schismatics,

|| These eminent men were all, except Milton, either Arians, or Socinians. Whiston was also a Baptist for twenty years before his death. This was also the judgement of Sir Isaac Newton, and I am inclined to think of Dr. Clarke. See Whiston's Memoirs, written by himself. page 178. Milton was orthodox in doctrine, but dreadfully heterodox in discipline. He separated from high church and low church, and "worshipped God in spirit and truth." Bishop Newton's Life of Milton. page 76. Good Dr. Watts, (who certainly ranks among the greatest scholars of this country) invoked "fair charity" to find Locke in the heavenly regions. See his Lyric Poems. Some very orthodox men have since invoked "fair charity" to find the Doctor; and, more charitable still, say, "The learned Doctor was touched in his head before his death."

schismatics, or damnable heretics. Whence did this happen? — Let uniformity be established in a nation at large, or professed in a meeting house, — Let men be invited to believe what they do not understand, — Let men of unequal capacities be forced to the same exertions, — Let genius be curbed, and dulness over-driven, — Let a nation advance in knowledge, yet not alter their practice, — Let them still repeat the same creeds, practice the same ceremonies, subscribe the same articles, and utter the same anathemas, — Let defects be acknowledged, but never remedied, let them in private be ridiculed, and even lamented, but in public still treated as sacred, — Let maxims of church policy thus oppose the first principles of common sense, and the customs of a nation, formed by those maxims, be at variance with the improvements of reason, — Let this I say be done, and a consequence will soon follow: parsons may preach, and the people may believe, but men of genius will get the start of divines, philosophers will not stay for Reformers. — This, Sirs, is heresy. — Priests have not always been the wisest men in nations, but they have usually retarded those improvements, which the times have called for.

I CANNOT allow myself to proceed to the next chapter without remarking, that Plato, Montesquieu and Beccaria, appear to me to speak more agreeably to the nature of things, than the learned Archdeacon of Carlisle. “In religion, says Mr. Paley, as in other truth, if different religions be professed in the same country, and the minds of men be unfettered, and unawed by intimidations of law, that religion, which is founded in maxims of reason, and credibility will gradually gain over the other to
it.

it. I do not mean, that men will formally renounce their ancient religion, but that they will adopt more rational doctrines, the improvements, and discoveries of neighbouring sects, by which means, the worse religion, without the ceremony of a Reformation, will insensibly assimilate itself to the better."† Let these remarks be compared with what Mr. Paley says on relaxing the terms of Subscription, according to the varying circumstances of the times, and that gentleman's sentiments on a very interesting subject may be collected, with which a great part of the more informed clergy have long agreed. Divines do not always speak out. I will, therefore, take the liberty of giving, what appears to me, the full meaning of Mr. Paley's concessions. We plead for an establishment, but acknowledge the gross imperfections of our own; we confess the grievous errors of our religious system, but are incapable of reforming them: we live in a land of liberty, where the light of truth shines; neighbouring sects have embraced more rational doctrines. But we are shackled by Subscriptions, intimidated by oaths, and - - - - - . We will adopt their modes of thinking, but still subscribe the same articles, repeat the same creeds, bind ourselves by the same oaths, and submit to the same canons, venerable with the rust of ancient errors. Reformation is not safe.

If we choose to consider our present establishment, as bearing any analogy to the ceremonial law of the Jews, we should recollect that the latter was barely equal to the wants of a particular period, and introductory to a permanent

† Paley's Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy, page 581. Quarto Edition. On Religious Establishment.

a permanent œconomy ; that it was mutable in its very intentions, and, even during its continuance, left room for practices, not absolutely commanded, correspondent to the circumstances of the times. Shall positive laws, which had a divine Author give way, and shall human imperfections, known and acknowledged to be such, be perpetuated? Mr. Hooker has some judicious remarks on positive laws, and Mr. Paley would have pleaded a better cause, I think, if he had applied the reasoning of Mr. Hooker on the mutability of positive laws to that of human creeds, and church polity.*

MR. Locke, speaking of the imperfect “measures of representation” in this nation, observes, “Whatsoever cannot but be acknowledged to be of advantage to the society, and people in general, upon just and lasting measures, will always when done, justify itself: and whenever the people shall choose their representatives upon just and undeniably equal measures, suitable to the original frame of the government, it cannot be doubted to be the will and act of the society, whoever permitted or cause them so to do.† This he makes the province of “prerogative,” which, it must be acknowledged, is, in many cases, a merciful provision: but for reasons, foreign to this part of my Inquiry, dangerous in the present instance. Evils introduced by the laws, the laws must remedy.

INEFFECTIVE

* Eccles. Polity. Lib. III. 10. to the end. See also Lib. I. 15. Mr. Hooker excepts from the number of positive laws what he calls the two Sacraments.

† Locke’s Essay on Government. Book II. Chap. XIII. § 158.

INEFFECTIVE laws weaken the authority of those, which are allowed to have an importance. Nothing renders legislation so contemptible as trifling. Among the Romans, the Falcidian law ordained, that the heir should always have the fourth part of the inheritance, another law allowed the testator to debar him of it. In England the canon law and the law of the land are at variance. This is trifling. The canon law should, at least, be altered.

IN this chapter I reason on the principles of one, that admits the expediency of an establishment. My real sentiments on this subject, I shall deliver in another place. — But, do we, in the year 1789, erect a ridiculous standard to the God Terminus, and say, “Concedo nulli?” This trifling will create a “sigh or a smile” in posterity.

C H A P. IX.

Whether Subscription will not create prejudices against respectable men, and against opinions, that may be true?

I HAVE already observed, that Subscription will lay an early prejudice in the mind in favour of opinions, which will prevent the free exercise of reason in future life. Must we not also take into the account those pre-
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judices,

judices, which Subscription will, probably, dispose us to indulge against men deserving our respect, and against opinions, which may prove true. Our articles and service book were drawn up when religious inquiry was subject to severe restraints, and are so expressed, as to create those prejudices, if the present enlightened times had not given men a more liberal turn of thinking. This evil cannot be too much lamented!

IN the early ages of the church the various opinions of the Epicureans, Platonists, Stoics, and Aristotelians, gave rise to a sect of philosophers, called Eclectæ, as they had before to the Sceptics. The leading principles of the former were very friendly to intellectual improvement. Supposing, that the whole system of divine truth was not confined to one sect, but dispersed among all, they made it the province of human sagacity to collect it together. And how greatly does it tend to the enlargement of the human faculties to associate with different sects, and to examine their different opinions! By increasing our stock of ideas, we collect new materials for reasoning, and enlarge the boundaries of science. But how often are our reasonings disjointed, and our conclusions unfairly drawn, because we are not in possession of those truths, which would have kept our reasonings straight, and made our conclusions just! For those, who have the greatest variety of intermediate ideas, and the happiest address in the application of them, will be the best reasoners. Some truths cannot be found in the soil, where we were born, but might, perhaps, be easily discovered, by searching for them on a more remote quarter: and by the assistance of these, as mediums of just reasoning,

reasoning, we might have discovered some defects in our ethics, some solecisms in our notions of government, and some heresies in our religion. Whereas, by suffering our prospect to be confined too soon, we are left strangers to those regions, which would have amply repaid our search.

MR. Locke, speaking of people, who thus contract their views, and who are, therefore, very often mistaken in their judgements, remarks, "The reason whereof is, they converse with but one sort of men, they read but one sort of books, they will not come to the hearing but of one sort of notions. The truth is, they canton out to themselves a little Goshen in the intellectual world, where light shines, and as they conclude day blesses them; but the rest of that vast expansion they give up to night and darkness, and so avoid coming near it. They have a pretty traffick with known correspondents in some little creek, within that they confine themselves, and are dexterous managers enough of that corner, with which they content themselves; but will not venture out in the great ocean of knowlege, to survey the riches which nature has stored other parts with, no less genuine, on less solid, no less useful, than what has fallen to their lot in the admired plenty, and self-sufficiency of their own little stock, which to them contains whatever is good in the universe." If men would ingenuously look abroad in the world beyond their own circle, Churchmen and Dissenters might perhaps find candour, learning, piety, and truth, where they little expect them. And nothing will assist so much in "bottoming our principles," as Mr. Locke expresses it, than such an intercourse with differ-

ent writers, and such an interchanging of ideas: But it scarce admits of a doubt, whether Subscription hath not frequently produced a contrary effect.*

C H A P.

* On reading the articles, and on comparing them with the spurious creed of Athanasius, have not many concluded, that Socinus, and Crellius must then, indeed, be "Devils." On examining the articles, canons, and college statutes, have not many imagined, that every "Anabaptist" was a libertine and an enthusiast? And on perusing certain public acts in Charles the Second's reign, might we not infer, that no just political sentiment ever entered the brain of a Quaker? All these men espoused sentiments, for which in the judgement of our forefathers, some of them would be damned in another world, and for which, they should either be burnt, or imprisoned, or transported in this.

Yet nothing is less true than all this. Of Socinus it is affirmed by the noble writer of his life, "*Hujus ego viri memoriam maxima posteritatis admiratione dignam cenſeo, qui tantillo quo vixit tempore tot tantosque errores, qui in eccleſiam furſtim irreperant, non modo ſuis veſtigiis adoratus eſt, ſed ex ipsis cubilibus extractos primus jugulari docuit.*" *Vita Socini conſcripta ab equite Polono, Operibus ſuis præfixa.* The Life of this eminent man is written in English by a respectable Baptist Miniſter. See Toulmin's Life of Fauſtus Socinus. Crellius too was no leſs diſtinguiſhed a character: and of ſuch men it was, that Grotius could ſay, *Illud vero ſeculo gratulor, repertos homines, qui neſcitum in controverſiis ſubtilibus tantum poterant, quantum in vera vitæ emendatione, et quotidiano ad ſanctitatem proſectu.* Grotii ad Joh. Crellium Epiſt. in qua gratias ipſi agit pro reſponſo ad ſuum librum de ſatisfactione Chriſti. Crellii Opera. Vol. III. page 232.

"There is hardly a good criticiſm in our modern expoſitors, Mr. Locke, Dr. Clarke, Dr. Benſon, Dr. Taylor, Meſſrs. Pearce and Hallet, and Dr. Sykes, but what is to be found in the *Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum*," ſays Dr. Harwood. *Biſhop Watſon's Theological Tracts*, Vol. VI. Appendix.

There are, perhaps, not to be found extant more rational notions of religion in any writings, than in the *Brevis Diſcuſſio*, alluded to, page 106, or the Sermons of the celebrated

C H A P. X.

*Whether the Athenian Test Oath comprehends
what will apply to Uniformity of Sentiment?*

WHATEVER respectable sentiments I entertain concerning the various excellencies of the writers, mentioned in the preceding chapter, the reader will please

celebrated Dr. Foster. I have only read one volume of the latter, but scruple not to say with Mr. Pope,

Let modest Foster, if he will, excel
Ten Metropolitans in preaching well,

Of Mr. Pen the celebrated Quaker Montesqueu observes, “Un législateur honnête homme a formé un peuple, ou la probité paroît aussi naturelle que la bravoure chez les Spartiates. M. Pen est un véritable Lycurgue, et quoique le premier ait eu la paix pour objet, comme l’autre a eu la guerre, ils se ressembloit dans la voie singulière, ou ils ont mis leur peuple, dans l’ascendant qu’ils ont eu sur des hommes libres, dans les préjugés, qu’ils ont vaincus, dans les passions qu’ils ont soumises. De l’Esprit des Loix. Liv. IV. Chap. VI.

Speaking as an Englishman, I say, no man had the interest of his country more at heart, and, perhaps, no man has written better on Civil Government, than the ingenious William Pen.

Mr. Pen’s Works are contained in five Volumes. I am strongly inclined to think that those political writers, who have ruled the taste of the nation for this last century, have been much indebted to them. Let prejudice be blind to the excellencies of these men, who have deserved the reputation, which others have frequently received! Of each of them I say, Tecum vivere amem, tecum obeam libens.—I have been speaking of Mr. Pen’s “political” works.

please to take notice, that the present argument, does not oblige me to side with either. I must be supposed to have interfered hitherto with religious sentiments no further, than the natural rights of mankind, or the powers of the human understanding, have been concerned. The design of the former chapter was to shew, that a Subscription to irrational systems tends to lay in the mind unwarrantable prejudices.

BUT the mention of the name of Mr. Pen brings to my remembrance that of Bishop Warburton,† and that reminds me of a promise, made the reader, concerning the Athenian Test Oath.

IF this had been produced by our church-statesman, merely to prove, that the Athenian government required a religious test, he might have spared his pomp of words. It was a matter of easy proof. But as it was certainly meant by him to serve also the purpose of the establishments of Christendom, and has been frequently pleaded in defence of Uniformity of religion, I shall inquire, How far it answers that purpose? Though it must be acknowledged, that Bishop Warburton did not undertake to prove the truth of any particular system of religion, but the utility arising from the connection of religion with government in general.

THE Athenian Test Oath, quoted by Stobæus from the Apothegms of the ancient Pythagoreans, was as follows,

I WILL

† See the Alliance, Book III. Chap. III.

I WILL not dishonour the sacred arms, nor desert my comrade in battle. "I will defend and protect my country and religion, whether alone, or in conjunction with others. I will not leave the public in a worse condition, than I found it, but in a better. I will be always ready to obey the supreme magistrate with prudence, and to submit to the established laws, and to all such as shall hereafter be established by full consent of the people; and I will never connive at any other, who shall presume to despise or disobey them, but will avenge all such attempts on the sanctity of the public either alone, or in conjunction with the people, and lastly, I will conform to the national religion. So help me those Gods, who are the avengers of perjury."† There are one or two little circumstances mentioned by other writers, which I drop, as having nothing to do with the present question: and I give the oath in Warburton's translation, to avoid the strife of words.

HERE I might ask, How the "submitting to the established laws, and whatsoever shall hereafter be established by full consent of the people" will apply to our canons, which were never authorized by our established law? I might inquire, How far it applies to the imposition of

39 ar-

† Οὐ καταίσχυνω ὅπλα τὰ ἱερά, ἔδ' ἐγκαταλείψω τὸν παραστάτην, ὅπως ἀν' εὐχισθῶ. ΑΜΥΝΩΔΕ ΥΠΕΡ ΙΕΡΩΝ, καὶ ὑπὲρ ὁσίων, καὶ μόνῳ, καὶ μετὰ πολλῶν· τὴν πατρίδα δὲ ἔκ εἰλασσω, παραδῶσω πλείῳ δὲ καὶ ἀρείῳ, ὅστις ἀν' παραδεξομαι· καὶ εὐηκόησω τῶν ἀεὶ κρινόντων ἐμφρονῶς, καὶ τοῖς θεομοῖς τοῖς ἰδρυμένοις πείσομαι, καὶ ἔς τινος ἀν' ἀλλῆς τὸ πλεθῶν ἰδρυσηταὶ ὁμοφρονῶς, καὶ ἀν' τις ἀναίρη τῆς θεσμῆς ἢ μὴ πειθῆται, ἔκ ἐπιτρέψω, ἀμυνῶ δὲ καὶ μόνῳ, καὶ μετὰ πάντων. καὶ ΙΕΡΑ ΤΑ ΠΑΤΡΙΑ ΤΙΜΗΣΩ· ἰσορρεῖς θεοὶ τέτων. Stobæi de Repub. Serm. 41. p. 243. Edit. Lugden.

39 articles, seeing there is no act of the legislature, made by consent of the people, which demands such Subscription? I might further inquire, Whether the Reformation was not begun, and advanced, at a time, by persons and means, which scarce allow us to ascribe it to the fair and uncontrolled judgement of the legislature? And further still, I might ask, Whether that part of the legislature, which expresses the wishes of the people, have not made repeated attempts for altering, improving, and abrogating particular imperfections, and finally, Whether the reigning sentiments allow us to say, that the 39 articles are declarative of the present religious sentiments of the nation? But questions of this kind I postpone.

Now admitting that the rites, ceremonies, sacrifices and temples of the ancient Athenians were regulated by law, that the fees of their priests were directed by the civil magistrates, and that the priests themselves were even responsible to them for their conduct while in office,* admitting too, (notwithstanding the infinite variety of their Gods, and consequently, the great diversity of their rites,) that no new God could be admitted without the sanction of their "most sacred and venerable tribunal,"† in a word, admitting the full import of the present oath, viz. that the religion of the Athenians was established by law, still I wish to be informed, Whether from all antiquity there can be produced any example of a standard of orthodoxy, any formulary, expressive of "a uniformity of sentiment?"

As I incline to think, no positive proof can be produced

* Æschines in Ctesiphontem. P. 18, Edit. Oxon.

† The Areopagus.

ed in favour of this notion, I shall advance some probable arguments to prove the negative, viz. that no such notion was ever entertained.

It will be observed, then, that this oath declarative of the national religion, must relate to the Gods in general, without any definition of their nature, and to their country rites, without specifying any particular doctrines. And thus runs an ancient law of Draco's, Let it be a law among the Athenians for ever sacred and inviolable, to pay proper worship to their Gods in public, and native heroes, after the usual customs of their country. † So also Pythagoras speaks "First, honour the Gods, as it is laid down by law, &c.*

THE directions of the other Grecian legislators run in the same general strain. In the Preface to the laws of Zaleucus preserved in Stobæus, where it is said, That those who inhabit a city should worship the Gods of their country, though some remarks are made concerning those dispositions, which should accompany the worship, we have no hint concerning any speculative opinions. †

WHETHER the ancient legislators were too wise, or too ignorant, to lay down precise rules of faith, I will not determine. This is certain, that the different philosophers, and their disciples, were so many parties in religion, maintaining almost endless opinions on subjects, which would have been ascertained in a prescribed formula, any way resembling our's. Their notions had been

† Porphyrius *περί αποχρηστικων ενουχων.*

* Pythagoræ *Χερσέα επιη.* v. 1.

† Proœmium Zeleuci Legum apud Stobæum de Leg. & Consuet. Sermo. 47. pag. 279. Edit. Lugden.

been so diversified only concerning the chief good, as to prepare the way for the refinements, which took place in Varro's time, when no less than two hundred and eighty eight opinions were entertained on that single article. ||

FURTHER. Whence was it, I have often asked myself, that we hear not among the Grecian states of disqualifications, proscriptions, imprisonments and deaths, for religion? Amidst all the contentions of the ancient philosophers, maintained in open day, and supported with all the form of argument, they differed from each other, they differed frequently from themselves, yet nobody called them heretics. Will any one choose to say, "They acted with the vulgar, but thought with the wise?" It will be more generous, and, perhaps safer to say, They had no Harmonies, no Concords, no thirty-nine articles. Articles make heretics.

"BUT did not the Grecian states punish for religious sentiments?" — Protagoras doubted, whether there were any Gods; Diagoras denied their existence; † Andocides profaned the mysteries of Ceres, and mutilated the statues of Mercury. * The Athenian laws meant to suppress Atheists, and to punish those who opposed the national Gods, such also who profaned their mysteries, pillaged their temples, or defaced their statues: but they did not require uniformity of sentiment.

"BUT the Athenian Reformer suffered death for his religious

|| Aug. de Civ. Dei Lib. XIX. Cap. I.

† Cicero de Nat. Deorum. Lib. I. Sect. 1.

* Lyfiæ Orat. contra Andocidē ἀσεβείαν.

ligious sentiments." It is certain, he suffered death, but, that he suffered death for religious opinions, is not so certain. All who thought "they knew something," the objects of his irony, became enemies to Socrates, who professed to "know nothing," but whom the oracle declared the wisest of all men.† And to their malice, putting a false construction on his conduct, and giving a forced interpretation to the laws, Socrates fell a victim. But there was no act for Uniformity of sentiment, no Ordinance, subjecting to imprisonment and the pains of death, for the crime of thinking awry on a trinity in unity.

I WILL not detract from the character of the "divine Socrates," surpassed by none, perhaps, but the great "Exemplar of morals."* He was enlightened beyond any man of the ancient world. But did he stand aloof from the superstition of the times? In his admired apology he adjured the public Gods,§ and at his death did homage to the religion of his country.‡ He thought, but did not suffer death for thinking.

OH! man I venerate thy nature. I will admire the noble, the sublime, the majestic human form, though under the complexion of the footy African; and I will listen to the voice of reason, the prerogative of man, among Chinese and Tartars.

THERE

† Vid. Apol. Socratis.

* See Bishop Law's Life and Character of Christ.

§ Apol. Socratis, p. 81. & passim. Edit. Forster.

‡ Platonis Dial. Περὶ ψυχῆς, pag. 313. Edit. Forster.
This I think the most probable inference from his requiring a cock to be offered to Æsculapius.

THERE are certain ideas of uniformity, which sometimes strike great geniuses (For they even affected Charlemagne,) but they infallibly make an impression on little souls. They discover therein a kind of perfection, because it is impossible for them not to discover it. The same weights in the police, the same measures in commerce, the same laws in the state, the same religion in all its parts. But is this always right and without exception? Is the evil of changing always worse than that of suffering? And does not a greatness of genius consist in distinguishing between cases, in which uniformity is requisite, and those, in which there is a necessity for differences? In China the Chinese are governed by the Chinese ceremonial, and the Tartars by theirs, and yet there is no nation in the world, that aims so much at tranquillity. If the people observe the laws, what signifies it, whether these laws are the same?*

AND if people are disposed to think, what signifies it, whether they all think alike?

* Montesquieu. *Esprit des Loix*, Liv. XXIX, Cap. XVIII,

C H A P. XI.

Objections Answered.

1. **B**UT it has been objected that Subscription is a necessary bar to exclude error.

I INTRODUCE this objection again, (which has in fact already been replied to, for the sake of Dr. Waterland's remark. "More regard is to be had, he says, to a select number of wise men, than to a few conceited opiniators. Dr. Clarke was one of these conceited opiniators: || — and the conceited opiniators, who have objected to the doctrines of the church, will be found among the wisest men, that this nation, or any other nation ever produced" — He adds, "All protestant churches have took to this way of securing the truth" — I could point to some reformed churches, which never did. "It is just in the doctor to acknowledge, that this is not an infallible way of securing the truth." But the church of Rome then has abundantly the better in this argument — "I am infallible, she says, therefore I lay down the truth" — But the church of England acknowledges, that all the churches have erred, she denies not, that herself may err, and yet she seats herself in the infallible chair, and, by help of the civil magistrate, secures the truth.

OTHER

|| Waterland's Case of Arian Subscription,

2. OTHER writers, asserting the prerogatives of reasons, will not allow human imperfections to overtop its pretensions, by a claim of infallibility. Our church, no less than others, say they, is liable to mistakes: our articles are not articles of truth, nor even of opinion, but of peace, and mutual forbearance: soft and soothing soporifics, it seems, to lay asleep the violent passions of divines, and to keep them from quarrelling. Generous provision! I wish it had succeeded. But, unfortunately, the history of the articles shews, that they are to be subscribed to avoid diversity of judgement. A proposition, containing an interpretation of scripture, and addressed to the judgement, is an opinion, and, vice versa, an opinion on a doctrine of scripture, drawn out in a proposition, is an interpretation of scripture, supposed to be true.

3. SOME, who call themselves the advocates for free grace, are alarmed at what is called rational christianity. The religion of Jesus, they say, is a divine revelation, not subject to the laws of philosophy. It must, therefore, be perfect and give laws to reason; but shall reason prescribe rules to Revelation? I have already observed that certain divines maintain the more mysterious a divine Revelation is, it has so many more degrees of probability; that the more a doctrine exceeds the comprehension of reason, the more reasonable it is to embrace it.† There is also, it is said, a certain great power, or Spirit, accompanying the Gospel, the subjects of which experience an agreement in the great leading truths.” Those

† Beveridge on the Thirty-nine Articles, and Private Thoughts, and the Methodists.

Those who experience not this agreement, we may love as men, but cannot embrace as christians. Subscription is the party wall of separation.

I REPLY, the present question touches not the truth or falsehood of christianity; but relating to the original frame and constitution of the human mind, stands, like the former on natural rights, independant of christianity. In vain you ask me, Are you a child of grace? My question ought to come first, Am I not endued with reason? If this great power counteract the principles of reason, it will be difficult to convince me, that it is divine. I ought not, and indeed, strictly speaking, I cannot believe any doctrine, contradicted by my reason, or which cannot be comprehended by it. However, I avow my belief in christianity — but still ask, if this power produce unity of faith, How is it, that different churches, all laying claim to the same divine influence, present us with different confessions? — The Quaker tells me, All men have a measure of saving grace; the Arminian, that all may have it, who seek it, the Calvinist, that none are favoured with it, but the elect.

4. Some sensible writers have found a way to alleviate the severity of Subscription thus. Suspicious of every encroachment on the sublime faculties of man, and incapable of making certain mysteries wear any reasonable appearance, they say, "A trinity in unity!" It surpasses every stretch of our reason! — That a Son should be begotten of a Father, and a Holy Ghost proceed from both, and yet that "none should be before or after the other, none greater or less than the other," we can reconcile

cile neither to reasonings a priori, or a posteriori. In our world we have nothing analogous to it; to a society of rationals, they appear contradictions. In vain we search for an intermediate idea, to shew, that two contradictions can have a connection. We subscribe, then, continue they, to no fixed sense, but to “any sense the words can bear” — “so far, as they are agreeable to scripture, or in that sense, in which they are agreeable to scripture.”†

I REPLY, the articles and creeds are set forth as the true sense of scripture; How then can we take them so far as is agreeable to scripture? This mode of Subscription supposes, they have no true sense, indeed no sense at all. As to the other form, “In that sense in which they are agreeable to scripture,” they have, and ought, to have but one sense. When, therefore, we approach the articles with such reserves, and are for thus making our own terms, we are taking possession of a ground already occupied. That they are not contrary to scripture, is determined already, nor have we left a right of private determination.

5. SOME plead the unavoidable imperfection of human establishments. In this objection the necessity of some religious establishment is supposed. These imply “some public forms, public forms require some leading truths, agreeable to which they are to be framed; and the leading truths require a standing clergy to teach them — all which necessarily introduce Subscription.”*

ON the necessity of establishments I shall speak in another place — At present I would observe, that if our establishments,

† Dr. Clarke's Reply. * Paley.

establishments, or even christianity itself, throw impediments in the way of the human understanding, or set its different powers, as it were, at variance, I shall not scruple to give them all up. For, however plausible an appearance they make, there must somewhere be a defect. Can any thing be true, that contradicts self-evident principles? Natural or rational, that disorders the whole province of reason? But, were an establishment granted, Subscription does not appear to me necessarily to follow — particularly as there may be a “Mechanical way of teaching established doctrines, which is, for the teacher to have no opinions of his own”† — And even granting the necessity of some Subscription, our present mode, in my opinion, would be liable to insuperable difficulties.

BUT, if Subscription be so irrational a concern, whence is it, that so many men of strong reasoning powers subscribe? Many sensible men, no doubt, act under the shelter of ancient prejudices, may think it, perhaps, hazardous, to go against the tide of popular opinion, or, though acknowledging the errors of the present establishment, may suppose some establishment absolutely necessary, or may even be allured by the prospect of usefulness. — But an evil, of so large a growth as Subscription, must not be flattered. With every possible concession, then, made within the secret of my heart, for every sincere man, I say,

I. PHILOSOPHERS sometimes play the sophist. A sophist is one, who by a specious, and false kind of logic, makes the worse appear the better cause, throwing

† Hey's Syllabus of Lectures.

ing into the scales of error those arguments, which ought to give weight to truth. I believe, says a philosopher, the Newtonian system, but I will reason on the principles of the Ptolemaic — What dangerous reasoning is this, when applied to moral subjects! What evil consequences must follow, when men vindicate error to shew their parts, and subscribe to its truth, to get the better of an argument!

FALSE reasoning, indeed, may proceed from various causes, and he who uses it may be an honest man. But sophistry proceeds from a design to impose on ourselves, or to deceive others. There are not a few, who say “The articles have one sense, and that the sense of the nation is another:” that, therefore, “the literal and grammatical, is not the true sense,” or, that though “we subscribe them in the sense of the Reformers, we may believe them in the sense of the nation.” Then again, we are told, that some of the articles have “two senses,” both true, so that a “Calvinist or Arminian may with equal sincerity subscribe them, though an Arian or Socinian cannot:” that some of them, more comprehensive still have even “three senses, all true” and, at length, to ease all scrupulous consciences, it has lately been insinuated, that the present times are liberal and enlightened above all others; that the candidate for holy orders, and the right reverend divine who ordains, must be supposed to have availed themselves of modern improvements, and to understand each other: for, though there be, indeed, an old form, which says something about a literal and grammatical sense, yet it means nothing, *vox et præterea nihil*. Thus, by help of a “tacit Reformation,” all things
continue

continue the same, yet all things are altered. Now, I have read many episcopal writers, on different sides of this question, who charge each other with sophistry. On whom the charge falls, or whether it fall on either, I venture not to decide. Where men's intentions are upright, and they speak to the best of their judgement, I must still beg leave to call these assertions conclusions, drawn from false premises. But if they really meant to impose on us, and their judgements, were better informed, their conclusions, then, I call sophistical, depending on these sophisms: That, truth has a changeableness of nature; that, faith has nothing precise and determinate; and that, we may profess falsehood to be truth, and yet retain the character of integrity. In either case, they have laid a foundation for much sophistry among subscribers; many of whom, as men of reason have been very averse to subscription, but by help of a little sophistry have first beguiled themselves to submit to it, and have, afterwards, pleaded for it as a reasonable practice.

AGAIN, philosophers may sometimes sustain the character of politicians. A politician I call one, who studies the art of governing mankind. A rare and superior being! Now when philosophers turn politicians, they are for finding the readiest way to obtain their ends. What must be done? They study the prejudices, the weaknesses, and the fears of mankind. They find, that men are wont to be over-awed by superstition, and, when under an ecclesiastical muzzle will follow wherever they are led. — These gentlemen laugh at Subscription and priestcraft, but still think that priestcraft is an admirable provision for frail mortals, and Subscription a necessary evil.

evil. Sir Henry Wotton once said, That an ambassador was one sent abroad, *mentiendi gratia*. A politician is, sometimes, one kept at home for the same purpose.*

3. PHILOSOPHERS may sometimes be divines. A divine is a serious character: but the most serious part of it is, that all his flattering prospects, and golden hopes rise out of Subscription. Ask a true disciple of Confucius, What is a divine? He would reply, perhaps, many are the priests of Foe, but few are the ministers of Truth. The disciples of Mr. Robert Barclay would answer: A divine is a tradesman, the church is the market, preferments the matter of sale, and Subscription the ready money with which he trafficks. No Subscription, no Preferment. Men of superior parts, may find, without difficulty, plausible reasons for what they disapprove. Quatenus philosophers, they may object to Subscription; yet, quatenus politicians or divines, they may plead in its defence.

BUT is Subscription to 39 articles so irrational? Subscription to any articles cannot be justified on any principles of reason: whatever be the number of the articles, and wherever they be fabricated, whether at Trent, at Lambeth, at Dort, or at Westminster, all alike tend to enslave the understanding, and to retard the progress of truth. Let not what has been said, therefore, be confined to the established church. I am inclined to think, that many who would pass for friends to intellectual liberty, and indulge no favourable sentiments towards our
present

* *Legatus est vir bonus peregre missus mentiendi gratia.* Sir Henry Wotton's Life prefixed to his Remains.

present establishment, will be found also to have betray
 their goddess into the hands of enemies. I mean some
 protestant dissenters. We will not, say they, subscribe
 39 articles — we will call no man master. This is well
 spoken; yet is not an entrance barred into many of their
 churches and academies by conditions equally oppressive
 to the human mind, equally unfriendly to religious truth.
 Have they not also got their fundamental articles, their
 essential points, their great leading truths? What be-
 comes of their intellectual liberty, say church-men?
 May not five points enslave the human understanding, as
 well as 39? Where is, then, the great difference between
 church and meeting, except, that the latter are not in-
 trusted with the liberties of mankind, nor in alliance
 with the civil powers? They are not in the saddle, and
 therefore cannot ride.

THOSE who have known me, since my connection
 with dissenters, cannot suspect, that I indulge prejudi-
 ces against any party. I have had intercourse with most
 of the sects, and engagements with many societies. My
 conscience bears me testimony, that I have in the most
 disinterested manner wished their good, and that I still
 feel a sincere concern for their true dignity. But I say,
 if the enemy has also sown tares in dissenting churches,
 and academies, dissenters should pluck them up, or be
 silent on the subject of Subscription.

I SAY, they should pluck them up — For I must still
 avow, that they breath an air, which encourages the no-
 blest exertions. If they retain some principles and prac-
 tices, the remains of ungenerous and irrational systems
 (carried

(carried over by them from communities, formed by the kingdoms of the world) these certainly bespeak a defect — it becomes them to examine where the defect lies, and it will be their honour to search out for a remedy. Indeed, many of their churches and academies have never bowed the neck to any taskmasters; and, of late years, one Institution has been erected, which, it is to be hoped, may be a model to the rising generation. On its excellencies I shall not take upon me to enlarge: it is sufficient for my purpose to observe, what I have hinted before, that the shadow of a Subscription is not known in it. The rational faculties there receive no interruption.

As to the church, (for with that I am here more immediately concerned,) I will be free to say, that no material reformation can be made in it, that involves not a rejection of Subscription to 39 articles. Such an establishment, (though I am happy it does not fall to my province, to defend any form whatever) would be more plausible, perhaps more durable, and a scheme of this kind has been proposed by several very able men. But, in regard to the present ecclesiastical constitution, the more it is considered in relation to the human understanding, and the more it is founded by those, who have no interest to serve in supporting it, the more, I am inclined to think, they will be disposed to say, *Tinnit, inane est.*

PEACE to those gentle philosophers, who feel a reverence for the reason of man! Who, being taught, that what shackles, debases it, are aiming to remove every chain. Whether they be church-men, or dissenters,
whether

whether they instruct in our churches, preside in our academies, take part in the management of public affairs, or adorn private and domestic life, peace be to all, who with patience, and yet with zeal, are "cultivating the barren spot, discerned only by a few,"† remembering, *Nihil agitur, dum aliquid agendum.* We rend the air with shouts before the conquerors of mankind; but these are the men, whom the wishes of a nation should immortalize.

† Beccaria,

P A R T III.

*How far is Subscription consistent with the
Principles of the British Constitution?*

C H A P. I.

The Principles of the British Constitution.

THERE is a noble pride, which is always characteristic of a nation of freemen. Such were, once, the little independent states of ancient Greece: such too were the Romans in the happier days of their republic, they were urged by the strong passion, love of liberty, and stand foremost in the page of history, challenging the admiration of ages. They were truly "principes terrarum populi."† Britons, too, boast a constitution, the form of whose government hath always been free. Love of liberty was ever the British passion. Let me be permitted, then, to indulge this spirit myself, while I
inquire,

† Tacitus.

inquire, How far the principles, which support the 39 articles, are consistent with the fundamental principles of the British constitution, How far Subscription is to be reconciled with the dignity of an Englishman?

“ALL civil government, (says Dr. Price) so far as it is free, is the creature of the people. It originates with them, it is conducted under their direction, and has in view nothing but their happiness; all its different forms are nothing more, than so many different modes, in which they choose to conduct their affairs, and to secure their quiet enjoyment. In every free state every man is his own legislator; all taxes are free gifts for public services: all laws are particular provisions, or regulations, established by common consent for gaining protection and safety. And all magistrates are trustees or deputies for carrying these regulations into effect.”*

As far, then, as any state is regulated by laws of its own making, defining the boundaries of men's actions, as members of the same community, so as to leave them free within those boundaries, they may be said to enjoy liberty.

WHILE the Africans and Asiatics had been from time immemorial trained to despotism, the nations of Europe were in early possession of the principles of liberty. Prior to the Golden Bull of Germany, or Magna Charta of England, they had Parliaments, where they assembled for public business, and appointed their sovereigns.

* Price on Civil Liberty.

reigns. Tacitus and Cæsar shew us,* that such assemblies were not peculiar to the Germans. They were possessed

* *De republica non nisi per consilium loqui conceditur.* Cæsar de Bell. Gall. Lib. VI. pag. 97. edit. Scaligeri. Convocatis eorum principibus, quorum magnam copiam in castris habebat, in his Divitiaco, et Lisco, qui summo magistratui præerat, (quem Vergobretum appellant aedui), qui creatur annuus, &c. Lib. I. pag. 9. The college of Druids was regulated on the same principles. If any person was possessed of superior dignity, he succeeded, of course, to the principal rule. At si sunt plures pares, suffragio Druidum adlegitur. Lib. I. p. 91. The ancient Germans, in time of peace, had no supreme magistrate, Nullus communis est magistratus, says Caesar, but the princes, who formed a kind of parliament, administered justice in their own districts. In time of war, magistrates were chosen, who had power of life and death. The ancient Germans had among them something like our House of Lords, and Commons, De minoribus principes consultant, de majoribus omnes; ita tamen, ut ea quoque, quorum penes plebem arbitrium est, apud principes pertractentur. Tacitus de moribus Germanorum. Cap. II.

I would not be thought to insinuate here, that the House of Commons took its present form either from the British or German model. It was an enlargement, or an improvement of the old feudal system. The King's tenants in chief, or great Barons, always held a place in the king's council. Those, who held lands in the way of villenage, under the great barons, were indeed, the merest slaves. The knights of shires, and representatives of cities and trading towns, (which form the present House of Commons,) took their rise afterwards, from an increase of property and freemen, and in some varying circumstances in the feudal tenures. So that after all it must be confessed, that the feudal government "was purely aristocratical." See Robertson's Hist. of Scotland, Vol. I. p. 15. Il avoit cet inconvenience que le bas peuple y etoit esclave. It is, however, sufficient for my purpose, that, Il etoit un bon gouvernement, qui avoit en soi la capacite de devenir meilleur. Montesquieu. In the Saxon times, all who had a share in the legislature sat in their Wittenagemote, or Parliament, personally, not, as afterwards by representatives. Spelman's Gloss. Tit. Gemote. p. 261.

possessed by the Gauls and Britons, prior to the settling of the Franks and Germans among them. The French were in possession of a real, till Lewis the 11th. made them change it for a mock parliament ;† the more northern nations felt the most generous attachment to liberty, and among its warmest assertors, are ranked the Britons.

It has, however, not been thought easy to reconcile certain occurrences in our own history with this observation. From the union of the two houses of York and Lancaster, during the reigns of the Tudors and Stuarts, a certain monopoly of authority had been challenged by the crown, which, by long possession, seemed the inheritance of majesty, and, at length, aspired so high, as to overshadow the claims of the people. For a century, at least, prerogative preserved an arbitrary dominion. British liberty was lost sight of, and many, upright and impartial men too, have even thought, that our high pretensions to liberty, had no foundation in the original constitution of the country, that every popular exertion was an encroachment on the rights of the crown, not to be justified on the principles of our government: our civil liberties being according to them, bounties derived from the benevolence of our princes. For many years, the people's representatives in parliament, the opinions of many learned judges, the sermons of the clergy, the tone of our princes, in short, the public voice, gave strength to this sentiment, elevating the claims of the prerogative, and, proportionably, degrading the rights of the people.

The

† See General View of Governments in Europe, affixed to Mr. Sidney's Discourses on Government, p. 26. 4to. Edit.

The ancient authentic histories of Britain are also imperfect, and the records themselves perplexed and obscured.* But, at the same time, were not many venal pens dipt in known falsehood? Have not many laboured to obscure the records of English liberty? Have they not traduced every good government ancient and modern, to make despotism wear a gracious popularity, and assume a divine form in England? — While there have been such unprincipled writers, it is to be lamented, that our most elegant historian should not have given a fairer representation of our constitution.†

It is always safe to admit, that power is of God, that is, that civil government was of divine original. But shall we say, that any particular form is established, as a model for nations, by the laws of Moses, or the precepts of Jesus? Let us not assert this. The laws of nations ought to relate to their principle of government. Many which are proper in Turkey, would have no propriety in Holland; and many, which are proper in Holland, could not exert themselves in Turkey. All government is just, where the people are controlled only by those laws, which themselves have made. The right, however, or origin of government, must certainly be traced to the fountain of all power, the people; though it may not be so easy to ascertain the rise of any particular government.

MANY

* Hurd's Dialogues. Dial. V. On the British Constitution.

† Hume began his History where he ought to have left off: and, instead of examining the Stuarts' conduct by the principles of the constitution, misrepresented the Constitution to justify the conduct of the Stuarts. Hence, as Bishop Hurd remarks, He has "confounded administration with constitution."

MANY circumstances tend to make this a matter of dispute in England. In the early part of our history, our government passed four times into the hands of foreign masters. Since the Reformation, the inhabitants have divided into different sects, each of which has its favourite prejudice; and the British government itself, since its boundaries have been more clearly marked out at the Revolution, is acknowledged to have some striking singularities. Many difficulties, therefore, are thrown in the way of an inquiry into British liberty. However, long before our famous Charter, as I hinted above, the Britons were a free people, and the principles of our present government seem derived from the feudal system. Certain prerogatives still claimed by the crown, many ancient rights of our British nobles, the peculiarities of estates and tenures abolished in Charles the second's reign, together with many national and local customs evidently rise out of that system; and make it safe to admit, that our present limited monarchy lay concealed under it in a kind of embryo state. The Norman conquest itself, though in some parts it has been thought to weaken the resemblance, in others brings it more fully to view. The characteristic feature of the ancient Germans was independance; and, wherever they carried their victorious arms, they introduced love of freedom. When the conquerors could no longer meet together in their own dominions, to deliberate on public business, they sent representatives to supply their room, and, in the conquered countries, governments were formed in imitation of the German model.* A corruption of their government, says Montesquieu, created the best government in the world.

* Tacitus de moribus Germ.

world. He elsewhere remarks more properly, that the Saxon government was good, and had in itself the power of growing better. "This beautiful system was first framed in the woods!"

How various must have been the internal commotions, the struggles, and exertions of three differing powers, which could bring about the present form of our limited monarchy. But our constitution has, in different periods of our history, spoke out its meaning, and it was always on the side of liberty. This was its language at the delivery of Magna Charta,† at the Declaration of Rights, under Charles the second, and particularly at the Revolution. This also was its language at the accession of the present family, and continues to be its language at every coronation. At those times it is seen, that as the common law, or the *lex non scripta*, and the statute law, or the *lex scripta*, are the basis of our government, so is civil liberty the object of our constitution.¶

I HAVE proposed to inquire, How far Subscription is consistent with the principles of the British constitution? It will be, therefore, proper to survey its most striking features.

THERE are three forms of government, a monarchy, an aristocracy, and a democracy; but, strictly speaking,
our's

† Monsieur Voltaire wrote too fast when he said, that the very title of the great charter sets it beyond all doubt that the king thought himself absolute *de jure*. Voltaire's Works, Vol. XVII. On the English Constitution. Vid. the note of the English Editors.

¶ Blackstone's Commentaries, Vol. I. Sect. 3. Of the Laws of England.

our's is neither the one, nor the other. It is a peculiar government, arising from a mixture of all, dropping the defect of each system, and preserving what is valuable of all. The excellence of a monarchical government, like that of France, is power; but power, if it be not watched with a jealous eye, and guarded by a hand stronger than its own, will be advancing on liberty. In an absolute monarchy, therefore, where the whole power is lodged in one man, his interest alone is regarded. The excellence of an oligarchy, like that of Venice or Geneva, is wisdom, but it is feeble, and partial. Venice is indebted to a Lion's mouth for secret information. And the council of the two hundred at Geneva never rested, till a power, only vested in them for a time swallowed up the democracy. The excellence of a democracy, is goodness, but it is wanting in power and goodness. There is also, an ultimum in liberty. The freest people in the world became, at length the most abject slaves, I mean the Romans.

A GOVERNMENT is complete, in proportion as it partakes of the three properties of power, wisdom, and goodness. Cicero and Plato thought, that a character so beautiful in theory, was, however, too perfect to be exhibited in real life. But there was an island, where this beautiful theory was to be reduced to practice. Whatever alterations the hand of time may effect on the constitution of England, whether it make use of the goodness of it, to bring about a popular form, or of its power, to create an absolute monarchy* it is certain, that

* Mr. Hume thought that it would terminate in an absolute government. On the British Government. Essay IX.
Montesquieu

that its present genius is great, and wise, and good. What a land of heroes would England be, if her citizens aspired at a dignity of character proportionable to the excellence of her government; and if her government were administered agreeably to her own principles!

IN this nation the supreme power is lodged in the three different branches of the constitution in union, and this power alone can make laws. The king, in his single capacity, has no right, and if the other two branches of the legislature maintain their legal dignity, no power, of framing a single law beyond the meanest subject. Indeed, in legislation the King's power consists in a bare negative. The principal strength of the crown being its executive power.*

As the two great councils of the nation are composed of peers† sitting in a legislative capacity in their own right, and a house of commons representing the people, and chosen by them, we are governed by our own laws. The power of raising taxes is lodged in the people alone, by their house of representatives. The commons, as Mr. Hume improperly expresses it, have assumed to themselves the sole power of disposing of public money. A violation of this constitutional right cost the unhappy Charles his life. Whatever relates to the life and liberty of the subject is guarded by our constitution with the most jealous eye. The judge only relates the law, the
king

Montesquieu says it will perish, when the legislative is more corrupt than the executive power.

* Blackstone. † Yet, strictly speaking, the Bishops are not peers of the realm, but only lords of parliament.

king is but the principal executive magistrate, the jury, without whom no subject can lose his life, our equals. But in all cases, the governing power resides in the law. There are courts of justice for redress of injuries, and of equity to supply their defects; and after all, in case of violation of the preceding rights, there is the liberty of petitioning the king, or either house of parliament for relief. In a word, we have certain natural rights, and the British Constitution is the guardian of them, and corresponds with the design of government, which is the preservation of property. So that, if our house of representatives were, indeed, an equal representation of the people, were they clear of that appellation of corruption from the other two branches of the legislature, which some say is essential to our constitution, † were our electors inaccessible to bribery, were our parliaments of short duration, and the members directed by a true spirit of British liberty, we should then actually possess, what is the immediate object of our government, perfect liberty; and what all good writers say should be the invariable design of civil polity, extensive national happiness.

SUCH are the outlines of our happy constitution. It is therefore, good, though the administration is frequently corrupt. But were the alarming influence of the crown lessened, which it has acquired by that immoderate share of property at its disposal,* and were a separation of ecclesiastical concerns from the civil magistrate to take place, a state of things, to which whatever deserves the name of reformation points, and in which, I am persuaded,

† Hume.

* Hume's Essays: and Robinson's Political Catechism, Administration. page 43, &c.

suaded, it will terminate, that is, were we in possession of the pure and genuine constitution, were this, I say, the case, it might be viewed with an enthusiasm of pleasure; and every true Briton might put up the ardent prayer, *Esto perpetua!*

It also falls in with my design to remark one peculiarity in the history of our country; which has not only been the mean of bringing our government into its present form, but also of confirming and strengthening it. It is this, that the *lex terræ*, or common law, has invariably ruled our higher courts of judicature. The preservation of this has been the cause of various struggles in the more early part of our history.

It is well known, that in the 12th. century the civil or Cæsarean law established itself in almost every part of Europe. This had been framed into a system under the emperor Justinian by Tribonian, at a time when Rome had lost its liberty; at a time, when she even courted servitude. This law, I say, enslaved almost all Europe. But it could never establish itself in England. For, though in four of our courts, the court of Admiralty, the military courts, the University courts, and the spiritual court, the civil law maintain its authority, yet it wholly depends on the sanction of the common law; nor has it any binding force further, than as it agrees with the *lex terræ*, or receives support from acts of parliament.* The common law retains a controlling force over it. In our higher courts of judicature, the common law alone prevails; the Justinian code has no power whatever. The watchful

* Blackstone's Commentaries, Vol. I. c. 3.

watchful assiduity of the Barons to guard this fort of British liberty, against the open attacks of the crown, and the more insidious attempts of the clergy, is well known; that too at a time, when an introduction of the civil law would have been productive of some temporary convenience to themselves.* They always withstood its incroachments. And to this circumstance, while the other nations of Europe were enslaved, we are indebted for the preservation of British liberty, and in one word, "church government is no essential part of the old English government." † Of which more hereafter.

HAVING premised thus much respecting our happy constitution, many a true Briton will anticipate what follows, and easily find an answer to this question, How far is Subscription consistent with the principles, of the British Constitution? But I proceed.

* *Omnes comites et barones una voce responderunt, quod nolunt leges Angliæ mutare.* See the Introduction to Magna Charta. Blackstone's Law Tracts, p. 334. 335.

† England's Present Interest considered. p. 237. See Pen's Select Works. Vol. III.

C H A P. II.

Whether Subscription do not imply a Resignation of Religious Liberty?

I ASK then whether to subscribe 39 articles be not bonafide to resign religious liberty?

By religious liberty I mean a freedom of choice in what relates to religion, uncontrolled by human authority.

THIS notion of religious liberty implies a right to range within the limits of natural and revealed religion to the full extent of my own intellectual powers, a freedom to adopt without any restraint from human authority that system of speculative opinions, and to follow that mode of divine worship, which appear to me true and just. I should also reserve to myself the liberty of correcting and improving my sentiments, according to the growth of my rational powers, and my future advances in natural and revealed knowledge: nor should I, on a religious account, expose myself to the smallest civil penalty, or become liable to a loss of my natural liberty; nor should I be forced, through a revolution in my sentiments, provided they do not interrupt the harmony of the society, and the order of their worship, to seek shelter in any other community, except I choose it. †

FROM

† See Robinson's Life of Monsieur Claude. p. 35.

FROM this view which is the completest notion, that I can form of religious liberty, it will follow, that so far as articles and creeds are laid down, as a term of admission into a society, and a disbelief is considered a reason for expulsion with civil penalties, and temporal inconveniences annexed, so far there is no religious liberty within that society.

TELL me then, ye sons of freedom, can a society, that has various creeds, numerous theological articles, long prescribed modes of worship, and established laws of ecclesiastical discipline, according to which it must act, or if the genius of that discipline were followed, be punished, can such a society, I say, be said to enjoy religious liberty? Has a person, who subscribes to 39 articles, and binds himself by oath to established laws of church discipline, any liberty of thought or action, as far as those articles, and laws extend?

It is true, I may not allow myself to give them a serious consideration, or I may subscribe them, with tolerable facility, and address, in the gross, or, perhaps, some of the sentiments may happen to correspond with my own; so that I may prefer that system to any other (and while preferments and 39 articles go hand in hand who can be surprized, that preference should be given to the most productive schemes.) But what then? Philander is confined in a room; he prefers staying there for the sake of the company, in which he finds himself, and the advantages, which he derives from it, yet he is not able to alter his condition, though he ever so much desired it: he might, indeed, flutter about like the poor
starling,

starling, and say, "I cannot get out, I cannot get out."
— Would Philander be free?

WITH as little propriety can a person be said to enjoy religious liberty within the limits of a society, to which he binds himself by 39 articles. Where we have no will, we have no liberty: liberty, as Mr. Locke justly observes, being an idea, that belongs not to volition or preferring, but to the person having the power of doing, or forbearing to do, according as the mind shall choose, or direct: which power, so far as a person subscribes either to speculative opinions, or prescribed modes of worship under the present restraints, he certainly has not. Subscription is a surrender of that power, or, at least, of a right to exercise it. If I subscribe, have I not got my limits, which I must not exceed? My articles, and my creeds, contrary to which I have no right to believe? My forms and my modes, from which I may not vary? My ne plus ultra, the extent of my tether; or to speak agreeably to my present representation, my chains, my badge of religious slavery? For, I must be allowed to maintain, that a person, who subscribes articles, in the literal and grammatical sense, has no right to think contrary to their literal and grammatical sense? I ask again, then, are not those articles the limits of his thoughts? And so far as my thoughts are limited and confined, have I any liberty of thought? But the 39 articles pretend, at least, to lay down a whole system of christian divinity, to contain every thing, that is important in christianity. I easily see then, how far my liberty of thought extends, and if I have no liberty of thought

I shall

I shall hold him a singular genius, who proves, that I possess religious liberty?

AND can any thing, Britons, be more servile and inglorious? Any thing more unbecoming the spirit and dignity of our characters? We boast a civil government which puts a high value on our lives, and holds our liberty, and our property sacred? But, with little propriety, while confined by an ecclesiastical constitution, which leaves us free in scarce one religious sentiment. Do we, as Britons, esteem civil liberty an invaluable blessing? And shall religious liberty bear no importance? Should they not like a well poised arch, though rising from different foundations, yet meet in the center? And, can I in strictness of speech be said to possess one, while I remain a stranger to the other? A writer, from whom on the subject of the present question I widely differ, has well remarked, "that the human faculties can never long remain in so violent and unnatural a state, as to have their operations perpetually checking, and defeating one another, by the contrary actions of two such opposite principles, as love of freedom, and acquiescence in slavery. The one or the other must in a little time prevail. Either the foul spirit of tyranny will defile the purity of religion, and introduce that blind submission of the understanding, and slavish compliance of the will into the church; or else the spirit of the Lord will overturn the usurpation of an unjust despotic power, and bring into the state, as well as the church, a free, and reasonable service. † Let this remark be applied to individuals.

Is not, indeed, an infringement of religious liberty an
encroachment

† Warburton's Alliance, Lib. II. C. 4.

encroachment on some of our dearest natural rights? Freedom to think, as I have observed before, is, to a rational creature, the same, as liberty to breathe. The voice which says, Sir, you shall not enjoy religious liberty, says, at the same time, Sir, I will trample on your property. For, What can I call property, if a right to think be not? Hence it was, that the Reformation, wherever it went, was favourable to civil liberty, and those countries, which were blessed with civil liberty, were best prepared to receive the Reformation. The celebrated little republic of Geneva illustrates the former remark, and the history of Britain the latter.*

BUT, it may be said, I confess, that a man need not put the chain on, except he choose. Philander did not choose. He was what you would, perhaps, call a poor creature. He knew a little Greek and Latin, but unpractised in the ways of men, was near experiencing the last of the two alternatives, "subscribe or starve." Poor Eugenius, indeed, put the chain on, but it sorely galled him, and he chose to have it taken off. Unhappy sufferer! I wept over his hard lot. He could not dig, to beg he was ashamed, and the hardy Briton died in a workhouse.

Aut die, aut accipe calcem—Under these circumstances, will any body ask, Who injures religious liberty?

* When the Genevese first caught the fire of protestantism, they were in subjection to an ecclesiastical sovereign, whose name was Pierre de la Beames. The father thought it expedient to leave the city, and afterwards by a decree of the people, and of the senate was legally banished. Charles, duke of Savoy wished to reinstate him, and took up arms in his defence. But the banished sovereign was never restored.

X

CHAP.

C H A P. III.

*Whether our Ecclesiastical corresponds with
our Civil Government?*

AS Subscription is concerned with an irrational and narrow system of what is called divinity, and so deprives men of religious liberty, Is it not also with a form of church polity, whose principles are contradictory to the genius of the English government?

It was with a view to this remark I stated the principles of our constitution. Now, Britons, survey the contrast. In the government of which I am speaking, Do we behold any of that agreeable mixture of the three systems, which is the spirit of our limited monarchy? When we survey a bench of Bishops, we may choose to call it an aristocratical appearance, when we contemplate the lower house of convocation, we may think the church wears a democratical form, and when we view the Archbishop, we may imagine the monarchical form. This, I know, has frequently been said by very eminent writers.* But, the resemblance is all imaginary; the edifice, of which we are speaking, received its being at first, and afterwards its peculiar shape, from the breath of kings:

* Hooker, and Blackstone;

kings: and, if we approach the building nearly, and examine the discipline, which is practiced within its walls, Shall we not find, that the will of the monarch retained the force of law? And, wherever this is, indeed, the case, however soothing a voice a government may borrow, however gracious and popular an air it may seem to carry, it is all deception, it is the mere form, without the spirit, of liberty. Wherever the will of the monarch is law, whether in China, in France, or in England, that government is strictly despotical.

IN regard then to our ecclesiastical constitution in England, whether it does not expose itself to the charge of despotism, according to the definition of it by political writers, let us proceed to inquire.

1. WAS not then the legislative power claimed by the King? The church has power to decree rites and ceremonies says the 20th. article. This clause is a forgery. However, passing that; you ask, who the church is? You are soon given to understand. For notwithstanding the just definition of a christian church † (Art. 9) viz. "that it is a congregation of faithful men," this power was exercised by the civil magistrate at the Reformation. When did the people decree one rite, or exercise of religion? When did the body of ecclesiastical representatives appointed by them? When did a bench of Bishops, or the clergy in convocation? Or when the Metropolitans, unless commissioned by the supreme Head? This is unheard of in our history. By going back to the time, when rites and ceremonies and articles were decreed, we shall soon find who decreed them, (I except here the parliament

† "Societas libera" hominum sponte sua coeuntium, ut Deum publice colant eo modo, quem credunt numini acceptum fore. Locke. Epist. de Tol. p. 6, 1765.

parliament in the civil wars, when it also exercised the executive power.) The Bishops and clergy opposed the first exercise of ecclesiastical supremacy, and the present form of the established church.† Cranmer, it is well known, objected strongly against the 6 articles in Henry the 8th's. reign. Bishop Latimer also made the same objection, and for his opposition, with 500 more, was sent to goal.* Did not many of the Bishops protest against the liturgy in Edward the 6th's. reign? And against the supremacy in Elizabeth's, some of them being designedly out of the house? ‖ Yet were they not all decreed maugre all the opposition of churchmen?

OUR Tudors, and our Stuarts well understood the extent of supremacy. They managed it more arbitrarily, than any other branch of their power, and under its shadow, became the creators of all our injunctions and church laws since the Reformation. And when we recollect, that prior to the renunciation of the pope's authority, the kings of England claimed a power in ecclesiastical matters, equal to that of the Roman Emperors after Constantine the great, we need not wonder, that being at length, in secure and ample possession of this jewel in their crown, they should defend it so warmly, and display it so proudly. Queen Elizabeth, as head of the church, knew she had them under awful discipline, and could "unfrock them" at her royal pleasure, and King James made no more of clapping such sacred things, as Bishops, in a tower, than a Justice of peace would of having half a dozen poor rogues hurried away to the round

† Burnet's Hist. of the Reform. Part I. p. 112.

* Burnet, ut sup. p. 266.

‖ Burnet, ut sup. Part II, p. 387, 388.

round house for opposing legal authority. "They were the breath of his majesty's nostrils." What could not a "king with a pope in his belly do?"

BUT, perhaps, it may be said the King and parliament have power to decree. Let that be granted. But even, then, Do we not still remove the power from the church? — Except we choose to say, the church is represented in the House of Commons, which, however, I shall shew is not the case. But the truth is, the first proceedings at the Reformation, under the authority of proclamations, royal patents, and commissions, had the force of law, before they received the sanction of parliament. It was, also, the policy of our princes to retain the old ecclesiastical canons, which were so friendly to the high claims of supremacy, rather than hazard the introduction of a new code, which might have been formed more to the genius of our free government. The same policy directed their affection to the civil lawyers, as the most loyal interpreters of the canon law.† And as to the canons put forth by order of James the first, they never received the ratification of parliament.*

THE power of legislation, if we trace it to its true source, will be found to flow originally from an arbitrary claim of Henry the 8th. (how far to be justified from the necessity of the case, or to be commended from the advantages derived from it, I do not stay to enquire) that it received the sanction of parliament, when subject to an unconstitutional controul from the crown, which could so degrade

† Hurd's Dialogues On the English Constitution.

* Blackstone, therefore, concludes they do not bind the laity.

degrade itself, as to pass an act, giving the King's proclamation the force of law, and, that now, the King decrees, and the parliament confirms.

YES, it must be acknowledged, indeed, that the supremacy was settled by an act of the legislature, which, while it threw over the royal claim the strength of law, was received by the monarch, perhaps, as a mere matter of form. It will, also, be allowed, that the legislature aimed to guard this high title by a constitutional condition, "That nothing be contrary to the law of the realm." But the character was already too far advanced, and soon thought itself too sacred, to be bounded by legal restraints. The power of supremacy soon created "a high commission court," which brought whatever related to religion under its own jurisdiction, and to keep the royal balance even, it was found expedient to enlarge the powers of the "star-chamber," in matters of a civil nature. Till, at length, from this fruitful supremacy, there sprung a natural branch, full of strength and vigour, I mean a "dispensing power," which was but a revival of the claims of papacy, and placed majesty above law; so that one of our kings made no scruple to say, "That general laws, made publicly in parliament, may upon known respects to the King, by his authority be mitigated, and suspended upon causes known only to him." †

2. As the legislative power in a state is that, which gives birth to the laws, the executive is that, which puts them in force. The union of these two in the Sultan at Constantinople

† Jus liberæ Monarchiæ, Jacobi Opera.

tinople makes him an absolute monarch. In the wise separation of these, consists the essence of British liberty.

By the laws of Britain, the first, and indeed strictly speaking the only executive magistrate is the King. For from him, as the "source of power" an extensive commission proceeds, giving birth to different offices of executive trust, as well as dignity and effect to all their proceedings. Under shelter of this commission, ambassadors manage treaties, settle peace, and proclaim war. The navy, army, bank, mint, and courts of judicature, are, likewise, all filled with their respective officers, who are to be considered as the King's proxies. And pray, What are the Clergy? When performing divine service, or occupying ecclesiastical courts, they retain the same character in the church, which the other officers do in the state. They are administering, in their separate departments, what it is impossible for the King to administer in his own person, yet all holding their places directly, or indirectly of the King.

By the famous act in Henry the 8th's. reign, the King was vested with this extensive authority, "To exercise all manner of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and Archbishops, Bishops, Archdeacons, and other ecclesiastical persons, have no manner of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, but by and under the King's Majesty, who hath full power and authority to hear and determine all manner of ecclesiastical causes, and to reform and correct all vice, sin, errors, heresies, enormities, and abuses whatsoever, which, by any manner of spiritual authority or jurisdiction, ought or may be lawfully reformed. Accordingly at the Reformation,

mation, commissions were taken out by the Bishops for the exercise of spiritual jurisdiction, and those commissions were to be held only during the King's pleasure.* In these commissions, all jurisdiction, ecclesiastical as well as civil, is acknowledged to flow originally from the royal power of its supreme head, the fountain of all power within his own kingdom. Even the power of ordination is nothing but a grant, and was held only during the King's pleasure. And as all the different branches of the ministerial office are trusts derived from the King, all the power is revertible to him as its original source.† He may instruct‡ and he may prescribe the Clergy: he may suspend them from office, and he may deprive them, he may even excommunicate from the bosom of the church, and re-admit excommunicated persons within, independent of ecclesiastical courts, and even in opposition to the Bishops and clergy. And what is still more remarkable, this extraordinary authority was held by delegation; one strange title, which Lord Cromwell sustained, being that of Lord Vicegerent in ecclesiastical matters. By virtue of this title, he had the principal management of ecclesiastical proceedings, and took place of the Archbishop of Canterbury.† Our most eminent churchmen and Lawyers have, therefore, hardly done justice to this subject.

MR. Hooker says, "It has been taken, as if we did hold that Kings may prescribe what themselves think proper in

* Burnet's Hist of the Reformation. Part II. N. 2. Records.

† Towgoods. Dissent from the Ch. of Eng. justified. 5th. Edit. p. 24.

‡ See the Injunctions of Henry the eighth, Edward the sixth and Queen Elizabeth. &c.

† Burnet's Hist. of the Reform. Part II.

in the service of God, how the word may be taught, how the sacraments administered:" and this they certainly have done. He adds "finally, that Kings may do whatever is incident unto the office and duty of an ecclesiastical judge. Which opinions, says he, we count absurd.

BISHOP Burnet, always well affected to the interest of civil and religious liberty, takes every opportunity of qualifying the supremacy. Having previously spoken of the extent of the King's power in Henry the 8th's. reign, he remarks, "They acknowledged the ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the discharge of the pastoral office committed to the pastors of the church of Christ and his Apostles, and that the supremacy then pretended to, was no such extravagant power as some pretend to."* When speaking of the bishops, made by letters patent in Edward the 6th's. reign, "It is clear he says, that the episcopal function was acknowledged to be of divine appointment, and that the person was no otherwise named by the King, than as lay patrons present to livings."† Similar remarks he makes on the Supremacy in Queen Elizabeth's reign.

"WE must be careful" says Bishop Warburton, how we think the magistrate by virtue of this branch of the supremacy can make or confer the character of priest, or minister, or even himself exercise that office, and again, "The exercise only of that office, when made, being under the magistrate's direction."‡ Similar remarks are made by Coke and by Blackstone.

ONE of the articles, it must be acknowledged gives countenance

* Hooker's Eccles. Pol. Book VIII. p. 430. 1728.

† Burnet's Hist. of the Reform. ‡ Alliance, &c.

countenance to the assertions of these writers. "We give not to our princes the ministering of God's word and the sacraments;" which clause is further explained in the injunctions of Queen Elizabeth. But, let me be pardoned, if I say, the clause, and the injunctions are both sophistical. Let us consult matters of fact after the act of supremacy was past.

QUEEN Elizabeth's first Archbishop was Parker. The mode of his appointment was as follows. A Conge d'Elire was sent to Canterbury, authorizing the Dean and Prebendaries to proceed to an election. In the Queen's letter Parker is mentioned, as the person to be appointed. The great seal was afterwards put to a warrant, authorizing four Bishops to consecrate him. This mode of choosing has been retained ever since. It is no uncommon thing to make very profound distinctions, where there is no real difference, but with those, who do not suffer themselves to be imposed on by words, the difference between a proclamation, letters patent, and a Conge d'Elire will vanish. The Chapter have leave to choose, but the Queen hath the power to appoint or nominate. The Bishops consecrate, but whose is the image and superscription on the seal? Judge Blackstone speaking of the manner of choosing Bishops under the emperor Charlemagne remarks, "The mere form of election appeared to the people to be a matter of little consequence, while the crown was in possession of an absolute negative." But in the present case the crown has vastly more. All is done in the name, and by the authority of the King: whose pleasure, therefore, is both "ring and pastoral staff."

CONSIDER

3 CONSIDER again the clergy in the actual exercise of their office, or in the important business of jurisdiction: the whole was administered privilegio Reginae, vice regis. In their address to majesty they intreat the Queen to aid their wishes by her royal authority, they assure her, that so far from being influenced by selfwill, in comparison of her, they were but "dead dogs and fleas;" † very humbling words for the sacred order! In the commissions, issued by virtue of the act of supremacy, lay and ecclesiastical officers are deputed to "supply her room, to bear her name, and to act by her authority." ‡ It is true we cannot call her majesty a Bishop, a priest or a deacon, nor could we call her the Lord chancellor, a Secretary of state, or a Justice of the peace. But do we not know, that he who administers an office by another, administers it himself?

WHAT was queen Elizabeth's meaning, when she said, she could "unfrock" her Bishops? Certainly this, that she could suspend and even deprive them. Her Majesty did accordingly deprive 15 popish prelates, who refused the oath of supremacy. § James the first suspended Archbishop Abbot for refusing to licence a sermon, and the Bishop of Gloucester for refusing to swear he would never consent to an alteration in the church. James the second imprisoned seven Bishops, and suspended the Bishop of London, for refusing to suspend Dr. Snape. A clergyman, who hath been deprived may be reinstated by the civil magistrate. A parson was deprived

† Canes mortui et peulices. An Address against the use of Images. ‡ Vice, nomine, et autoritate nostris, § Burnet.

prived of his benefice, for crim. con. a general pardon came, which pardoned the adultery: and the divine was adjudged to be ipso facto restored to his benefice.† Now if the civil magistrate advance to office, if he can deprive, and if he can suspend, and if after deprivation he can reinstate a person to office, where is the executive power lodged, but in the civil magistrate?

THE truth then is, that the Kings of England are by the act of supremacy vested with the enormous power, which was exercised by the Roman emperors after the days of Julius Cæsar, who laid the foundation of the Roman monarchy. They are not, indeed, consecrated into all kinds of Priesthood, but all kinds of Priesthood are consecrated by their authority, and supply their place. Sacrifices and ceremonies which fall to the department of priests, the authority of the tribunes, who, in the times of the common wealth, acted for the people, and all the dignity and power of the ancient dictators, made up the character of a Roman emperor. Thus, the Kings of England oversee the ceremonies, which is the province of priests, they choose to office, which is the right of the people, and they have the government of the whole, which (I speak in ecclesiastical language) is the proper office of the Bishop. The whole executive power, then, is here lodged in the civil magistrate.

Now in our civil government, (considered apart from our ecclesiastical) while the legislative power is in the hands of the people, and the executive of the supreme magistrate, public liberty is secure, and general happiness is diffused. But, where the legislative and executive
power

† Coke 6 Rep. 13. See Towgood,

power are entrusted to the same hands, public liberty has no security, and national happiness will be proportionably retarded. Agreeably, therefore, to the principles of English polity, we say, that such power, though by the mode of administration, it may escape common observation, by whatever hands, and means it hath been introduced, whether by Kings or by priests, whether by arbitrary violence, unconstitutional influence, or clerical intrigue, such power is unconstitutional, and must, by its insinuation, and secret influence in our government, have produced many of those evils in our political system, against which the genuine spirit, and the original principles of liberty had made provision. "We see the summits of buildings, their foundations lie out of sight."* But the history of nations demonstrates this political truth, that where any power in a state can do harm, it sometimes will. Hence this prudential maxim, "Nothing wants so much watching."

NOR is it sufficient to say, (as I have already hinted,) that the church hath received the sanction of English law, and makes a part of legal administration. For as no law is just, even though established, which is not made by the people, and does not serve the public interest, so neither is it strictly constitutional, if it go contrary to the original principles, and general tendency of our constitution. And, on this consideration, I will take on me to say, that priesthood is no natural part of our body politic, but like an unseemly excrescence, mars its proportion, and exhausts its strength.

4. THE

* *Operum fastigia cernuntur, fundamenta latent.* Quintilian,

4. THE trial of criminals by a jury is a most important branch of the executive power: and it is reckoned among us an essential part of political prudence, that the King, in his own person, should possess no judicial capacity. Even in King James's time, when his majesty would needs distinguish himself in a court of judicature, he was informed, that he could give no opinion there. It hath been remarked, that if this were not the case, the King must either possess the ridiculous capacity of unmaking his own laws, or lose the great attribute of sovereignty, that of granting pardon. Besides, What security would the subject have against oppression? Where the principal executive magistrate is also judge, he may give an unjust decision, to inflict a cruel punishment.

THE government, of which I am speaking admits practices, not to be reconciled with this favourite maxim. I have already remarked the caution, with which the Britons guarded against the imperial or Roman law. This caution preserved the freedom of our civil constitution. But these laws, by which the Romans were enslaved to their emperors, which afterwards enslaved almost all Europe, in union with others, which made the Roman Pontiff sovereign judge of christendom, being formed into a body, govern our ecclesiastical courts. The common law, that guardian of English liberty, is a stranger in our "court of christianity." These laws receive their origin, and their characters, not from the voice of a free people, but from the authority of popes, and councils, of letters patent, and royal declarations. Henry the 8th. in the 35th. year of his reign, formed a design of framing a new body of ecclesiastical laws, but he

he laid it aside, the most probable reason of which I have already given. The same design was formed by the lower convocation in the reign of Edward the 6th. yet neither did this succeed. Some canons, indeed, were published by Queen Elizabeth, and a larger collection by James the first, but, as was observed before, they were not authorized by parliament, but imposed by the King's declaration, and agreed upon in Synod, Ann 1603. Ecclesiastical courts are held by laymen, and the clergy, as the King's ministers, and the King can disannul their decisions, and stop all their proceedings. Bishop Hoadley and Dr. Doddridge were preserved by majesty from the base designs of a convocation.

BUT the following case is well worthy of observation. In Queen Anne's reign the lower house of convocation judged Mr. Whiston guilty of heresy. He had written against the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. His judges, afterwards waited on her majesty, to receive her instructions, and she cleared Whiston of a damnable heresy.* The part, which her majesty took in this affair, was not that of a sovereign, dispensing a pardon to a criminal (as in the case of the parson, convicted of adultery,) but that of a judge, clearing the defendant of a crime. In a court of common law would such a practice be admitted?† But what shall we say, to see our princes sit as judges, and pass sentence of death for the crime of heresy? Yet this Henry the 8th. did.

IN

* See Towgood's Dissent justified. 5th. Edit. p. 27.

† The case alluded to was, that of Lambert, who was tried in Westminster Hall, and burnt for denying the corporal presence. Burnet's Hist. of the Reform. Part II. Book III. p. 254, 255.

IN a word, in this government the people are subject to laws, in the framing of which they had no share, they have been liable to troublesome proceſſes, without the benefit of a *jure parium*, the clergy are bound by flavish canons, quite foreign to the genius of our common law; miniſters are placed in pariſhes without the appointment of the people, and a vaſt tax is raiſed to pay them without the people's conſent.

BRITONS, ſurvey the beauteous form of Magna Charta, and ſee, whether ye can trace any feature of reſemblance to it, in the canons of the church, were our civil adminiſtered by the ſame plan of policy, as our eccleſiaſtical, our government would in fact be diſſolved, and we ſhould be placed in thoſe circumſtances, in which a people may juſtly make their appeal to heaven. †

IF for no other reaſon then, than becauſe I am an Engliſhman, I would not ſubſcribe the 39 articles. For the clergy are in a ſtate of abject dependance on the civil magiſtrate, and of miſerable ſubjection to unconfitutional canons. Yet pitiable as this ſubjection is, as it concerns the clergy, a plan, giving them relief, if it ſtopped there, might produce infinite evil on the community. While the civil magiſtrate, as Biſhop Warburton remarks, endows the clergy, and beſtows on them a jurisdiction with coactive powers, theſe privileges create one ſupreme government within another, if the civil magiſtrate have not in return, the ſupremacy of the church. And nothing is ſo much to be dreaded, as an eccleſiaſtical government, not under the controul of the civil magiſtrate. It is ever encroaching on his province, and can never be ſatiſfied. In the Roman church, when ſpiritual

† See Locke on Government. Book II. XIX,

tual men had got influence enough to be exempted from civil courts, and to set up a separate jurisdiction, Popes became by degrees the sovereigns of Emperors and Kings. Cardinals, the beloved children of those Popes, became princes; and Bishops, as their brothers, became at once secular and spiritual lords. And on the other hand, the presbyterian government, during the little time it prevailed in England, gave no favourable proofs of its designs, when its progress was retarded by Oliver, and his Independants. A religious establishment, free of many of these political evils, might be framed, but the true policy is, to let religion, and civil government, exist apart, and to encourage each to attend to its own province. Both then will flourish.

C H A P. IV.

The Persecuting Spirit of the Church of England.

BUT I cannot help remarking the spirit of persecution, which characterizes this system.

A NATION, asserting its own freedom, gives proof of public virtue. A people, free themselves, never act more

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in

in character, than by becoming the guardian of the liberty of others. What a severe, but just rebuke was this of the Roman conquerors! Liberty was at their center, but tyranny in their extreme parts. Nothing reflects higher honour on Britain, than the place, which she holds in the system of Europe, and the influence, which she has had in preserving the balance of power. Whatever tends to preserve that balance, tends to suppress tyranny.

A CHURCH, also, whose basis is laid in freedom, is favourable to the highest exertion of virtue, and the members, that compose it, never act more in character, than when they aim to procure religious liberty for other communities. It has, however, been often remarked, that people, the most violent in procuring liberty for themselves, have not been, in their turn, the most ready to bestow it on others. The Unitarians in Poland,† the Quakers in Pensylvania, and the Baptists in Rhode Island, reduced the amiable doctrine of moderation to practice, but most of those, called reformed churches, neither allowed it among themselves, nor suffered others to enjoy it. The French Protestants, who sacrificed every thing, to obtain religious liberty, knew not how to practice it;* and the Genevese, who freed themselves from one religious tyrant, were forced into an oligarchical system, which countenanced persecution.‡

I HAVE shewn, that the church of England allows no liberty to its own ministers. Does it not also violate the liberty of others?

LONG

† Crellius de vera Libertate. * Quick's Synodicon.

‡ Preface to Hooker's Eccles. Pol.

LONG before England learnt the art of persecution, other christian states had been accustomed to "deliver heretics to the secular power." This pious ardour seems not to have been congenial to the English taste. The first bill passed for this purpose, was in the days of Wickliffe: I call it a bill, for having never been sent to the House of Commons, it cannot be deemed a law.†

HENRY the 8th. was not over-anxious, it is said, to persecute for heresy. Many, indeed, were sacrificed either to his pleasure, or his ambition. Such were some of his Queens, the Bishop of Rochester, and Sir Thomas More. The cruel treatment of the family of Cardinal Pool will also be recollected: but others fell beneath religious oppression. Lambert was burnt for denying the corporal presence. In 1538, 500 were thrown into jail for opposing the 6 articles, and when Gardiner and Bonner came into power, Barnes, Gerard, and Jerome, were burnt. I take no notice of those who suffered, before his majesty became supreme Head of the church.

THE gentle Edward, too, to humour his divines, and to guard against heresy, was constrained, much against his inclination, to make two human sacrifices, Joan of Kent, and George Van Pare. Some experiments were also made on Mr. Humphrey Middleton. He was seasoned in Edward's, but not effectually cured till Mary's reign. Nor should it be forgotten, that the liturgy, authorized in 1548, was established under severe penalties, and

† See an account of this pious fraud in Burnet's Hist. of the Reform, Part I. p. 25.

and that popish Bishops were imprisoned by a protestant King. †

THE golden reign of the virgin Queen was interrupted by schismatics, and these (the Puritans, I mean) found work for the Bishops. Many lingered, and some died in jail, and others were burnt, — who were friends to the constitution, and felt a loyal attachment to her majesty. “Thou wast present at the death of Mr. Barrow,” said queen Elizabeth to the earl of Cumberland. “I was, and please your majesty,” replied his Lordship. “What end did he make?” continued the Queen. “A very godly end,” answered the earl, “and prayed for your majesty * and the state.” This injured Gentleman (Mr. Barrow) in his account of the high commission court, erected in this reign, justly remarks, “That it was prejudicial to the prerogative of the prince, the jurisdiction of the royal courts, to the liberty of the free subject, and to the great charter of England.” ‖

JAMES and the two Charleses were too true to the principles of the church of England, § finding persecution

† Bonner was confined in the marshalsea, Tunstall in the tower, as was also Gardiner, where, as Fox expresses it, “he kept his Christmas three years together.” Fox’s Acts and Monuments.

* Pierce’s Vindication of the Dissenters. Part I. p. 147.

‖ Barrow’s Platform.

§ I do not speak at random, when I call persecution a principle of the ch. of England. To understand in what sense it is so, it may be recollected, that the very James, who wrote a letter to Queen Elizabeth in behalf of the Puritans, when in Scotland, was the first to persecute them, when he became head of the ch. of England. See James’s Letter

tion the shortest manner of proof, that "The church hath power to decree rites and ceremonies." In Charles the Second's reign the act of Uniformity passed; in consequence of which, two thousand clergymen were ejected from their livings, and eight thousand puritans perished in jail: a greater number than what perished in the reign of that princess, whom all parties in England agree to call the bloody Mary.

PURITANISM, though in rags, still continued to gain ground. Church policy, therefore, required, that some vigorous efforts should be made; and as prisons could not produce conversions, a design was formed to starve it to death. The Conventicle, and Oxford acts, it was thought, would do the business completely. Cruel mother was that church, who first cast her children from her own bosom, and then deprived them of the compassion of strangers! Whose discipline, forced them from consecrated walls, and whose authority aimed to prevent them from worshipping God at all! *

LET

Letter to Queen Elizabeth, in Udal's Trial, p. 43. Dr. Heylyn, as Mr. Pierce hath observed, gives an imperfect copy of this letter. Hist. Presbyt. p. 316.

* By the former of these cruel acts, every parson, vicar, curate, lecturer or other person in holy orders, or pretended holy orders, was to take an oath, or not come within any city or town corporate, or borough, wherein they had preached before, under the penalty of forty pounds, or being committed to prison for six months without bail or mainprize. The oath was as follows,

"I, *A. B.* do swear, that it is not lawful, upon any pretence whatever, to take arms against the King, and that I do abhor that traiterous position of taking arms by his authority against his person, or against those, that are commissioned by him, in pursuance of such com-

LET it be recollected here, that while ecclesiastics were sporting with the consciences of mankind, the state made several efforts to give them ease. The parliament, during this period, wished to repair a superstitious church, and to mollify a cruel clergy. But fawning priests rendered their attempts fruitless. There was no meanness, to which they did not submit. They appealed to foreign divines, and suppressed their genuine testimonies. Even the prayers of these reverend politicians was the breath of intolerance, and fanned the flame of persecution. The history of the Quakers too in Charles the seconds reign exhibits instances of the most grievous oppression, and of the most unexampled patience. †

THAT

commissions; and that I will not at any time endeavour any alteration of government, either in church or state."

And to cut off the only hope that remained for many of them, they were prevented from teaching any public or private school, or taking boarders in their families, 17 C. II. c. 2.

By the Conventicle act, if five persons, or more, assembled together, besides those of the same household, either in a house, or place, where there was no family inhabiting, the penalty for the first offence was five shillings, for the second ten. Those who preached in a conventicle, for the first offence forfeited twenty pounds, for the second forty. Those who suffered conventicles in their house, forfeited twenty. These fines were to be levied by distress and sale of the person's goods or chattels: but in case of poverty, on any person convicted in the same manner in the same conventicle. Constables might break open doors, and Lieutenants, &c. might disperse conventicles, either with foot or horse, &c. Our learned Commentator on the laws of England, therefore, one would hope, was scarce in earnest, when he dates "the complete restitution of English liberty, from after the restoration of Charles the second." Vol. IV. Sect. 5.

† See Pen's Work's passim, It was in Newgate that

THAT was a joyful æra to dissenters, which gave them a legal character in England! Before the Revolution, nonconformity was treated as a crime by our law, and exposed to severe penalties. By the act of Toleration those penalties are not barely suspended; but dissenters are cleared of the crime itself, and provided they come within the limits of the Toleration act, are legally exempt from punishment.* The act of Toleration still wants the revising hand of the legislature. "It is not given with that latitude, which true christians, without ambition, or party views, could wish. But it is something to go thus far: for by these beginnings, those foundations of liberty and peace are, I hope, laid, on which the church of Christ will come in some future time to be established."† But so far as it goes, it was an act of the state, in which the church, as an ecclesiastical body, had no share. The last act of reformation was the framing of canons! Mr. Robinson's distinction is certainly just. The state tolerates, the church does not. §

Jews, and Catholics, Presbyterians, and Independants, Quakers and Baptists, and Churchmen themselves, are injured by Episcopacy. To preserve the church, it becomes necessary to deprive Englishmen of their rights. I, therefore, call it unconstitutional: and have
taken

Mr. Pen wrote his excellent piece entitled, *The great Cause of Liberty of Conscience debated and defended by the authority of Reason, Scripture, and Antiquity*. Select Works. Vol. III.

* Dr. Furneaux's admirable *Letters to Judge Blackstone*. Let. I.

† Mr. Locke's Letter to Mr. Limborch.

§ A Plan of Lectures on the Principles of Nonconformity. Pref. p. 5. Fifth Edit.

taken this short view of its practice, to exhibit its true genius. For, it was not as fathers of a free people, governed by their own laws, that the Kings of England imbrued their hands in blood, and sported with the liberties of their subjects, but as heads of a church, which cannot exist without persecution in some form; and as rulers of that church, certain spiritual Lords, ejected, persecuted, imprisoned, and burnt.

WHEN the English church persecuted, it will be said, they did but follow the current of the times, and kept pace with other reformed churches. From partial discoveries of truth, and imperfect notions of the interest of civil society, proceeded persecution. When the Reformers held, that societies of heretics were unlawful, because the errors, which they believed, were wicked; that some religious sentiments were not only dishonourable to religion, but injurious to society,—that it was the province of the civil magistrate, to protect the faithful, and to guard the truth—men who had adopted these sentiments into their creeds,* had but to determine first, who were heretics, and then to leave the sword for civil rulers, with pious directions, to use it for the glory of God! Strange piety, exclaim deists, that makes persecution an affair of conscience!

It is obvious, however, to remark, that the people, who in England exposed themselves to the censure of the civil magistrate, would be of two descriptions; those, who objected to matters of discipline, but were orthodox in doctrine, and those, who were heretical in doctrine, but orthodox in discipline.

THE

* Claude's Hist. Defence of the Reformation.

THE faithful have usually acknowledged the former to be of the true church. They were divided, indeed, from the body, but they were still considered as members. But the latter, who taught false doctrine, that is, sentiments, contrary to what the church believed, were not considered merely as divided from the body, but as never having been members. Such were the Arians reckoned by the orthodox. Now, the rigours, exercised in England, were usually against men, who, according to the 39 articles, were sound in the faith, but who objected to the discipline of the church,† a presumption, at least, that

† The reason, however, of our having so few examples of sufferers for doctrinal heresy, was not a scarcity of church laws and statutes for that purpose. But the truth is, the rage of orthodoxy had so inflamed all parties, as scarce to leave room for Arians and Socinians, to put the sole of their feet, and few thought of pursuing religious inquiry, but within the circle of orthodoxy. We have a remarkable example of this in the life of Mr. Biddle. This excellent person, of whom Mr. Anthony Wood says, "that, except his opinions, there was little or nothing blame-worthy in him," received the iron rod of persecution from the hands both of Presbyterians, and Episcopalians. At the solicitation of the former, the parliament passed a cruel Ordinance, than which, as the author of his life justly remarks, "No decree of any councils, no Bull of any Popes, could be more dogmatical, few, if any, more sanguinary." The sentence was not executed, owing to a cause, in which Presbyterian mercy had no share. He however, suffered afterwards seven years' imprisonment; and was again through the mercy of Cromwell, to preserve him from a harder fate, banished for three years to the Isle of Scylly. After the settlement of Charles II. he fell into the hands of Episcopalians, who once more threw him into jail, where in five weeks, through the noisomeness of the place, he caught a disease, which soon put an end to his existence. Toulmin's Review of the Life, Character, and Writings of the Rev. John Biddle, M. A. The same observation will apply to the sufferings of

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that persecution in England, has been not so much a matter of conscience, as of policy. Base policy, the policy of priests, not of Britons!

I HAVE already exceeded the limits of a chapter: but I must beg the reader's patience a minute or two longer.

I. I HAVE shewn, that the terms of ministerial conformity are not a little perplexing. If I subscribe, I resign my religious liberty, if I refuse to subscribe, perhaps, I am ruined. Let me take leave to add another word on this subject. Philander, whose case I stated page (161.) called on me the other day. He was telling me the sad tale of his sufferings, but before he got half through, he, who was by nature as gentle as a lamb, lost all patience. He said some bitter things against the act of supremacy, the 39 articles, and the liturgy, and growing warmer at every new period, he, at length, went so far, (for I will conceal nothing from thee, courteous reader,) as to call the church of England "the seat of the beast." Thou, reader, who hast perhaps subscribed, and enjoyest a comfortable warm place within the bosom of the church, mayest blame the asperity of poor Philander. For my part, I cannot find it in my heart to censure the afflicted. However, in few words I thus addressed my friend. "Philander," said I, pointing to the Statutes at Large, and the Book of Canons, which lay open on the table, "know, that thou art now liable to forfeit a hundred marks, and by repeating thy offence a third time, of being imprisoned for life.† Know further,

of Mr. Emlyn. See Memoirs of Mr. Emlyn's Life. pref. to his Works, Vol. I. Of which learned, disinterested and truly good men it may be said, "It was noble to stand upright, when the world declined!"

† 1 Eliz. c. 2,

ther, that thou also standest excommunicated by the canons,* and that if human nature had not something of softness in it, which flows with two brisk a current to be overtaken by the laws of the church, thou hadst placed thyself beyond the reach of pity."

In estimating the state of religious liberty within the
church

* See the eight first Canons of the church of England. By the three Canons, next following, Philander also is deprived of setting up a separate place of worship, without exposing himself to the same dreadful sentence, of being ipso facto excommunicated. It may not be amiss for the reader to recollect the 38th. article. "Of Excommunicate persons, how they are to be avoided."

There are two kinds of excommunication, the greater and the less. By the former, a person is pronounced accursed, consigned to the Devil, and cut off from Christ, and from fellowship with his church. The latter only excludes him from receiving the sacraments: but where the nature of the excommunication is not specified, the greater is always understood, *Excommunicatio simpliciter prolata, intelligitur de majori*. The following instructions given to the clergy will explain the church's sense of the greater excommunication.

Populum condocesciant, excommunication is fulmine perstrictam personam, ex ecclesia, quasi cadaver, ejici debere, nec Cænæ Domini participem, nec divinorum officiorum, nec christianæ societatis, sed a finu communis christianorum matris ecclesiæ revulsam, et abruptam a corpore christiano simul et terra esse exturbatam, diabolo, et ejus consceleratis ministris mancipatam, et sempiternis flammarum cruciatibus addictam. Reformatio Legum, Edit. Lond. 1640. p. 163. The ipso facto excommunication commences from the commission of the fact, which being supposed of a very heinous nature, did not require an ecclesiastical process. And thus, by the canons of the church, every Dissenter stands ipso facto excommunicated. May the sentence prove as harmless in another world, as that denounced by St. Hilary against the Flies! See Wilton's Review of some of the Articles of the church of England. Art. XXXIII.

church of England, I have always accustomed myself not barely to weigh the articles by themselves, but to throw into the scale all concomitant evils, all the fences, and human terrors, which surround them.

2. I HAVE quoted the act of supremacy, as it passed in Henry the eighth's reign. I will therefore just add, that an act, passed in Edward the 6th's. reign, was of the same import,* and, particularly, that passed in Elizabeth's, for though the Queen made some objection to the title, she did not scruple to use the whole power of the supreme Head.

3. IN addition to what I have said on our ecclesiastical polity, as compared with the civil, I will beg leave to remind the reader, that the æra of the clergy's subjection to the civil magistrate is to be dated from the Reformation. Prior to that period a synod might be assembled, and ecclesiastical business transacted, by the Bishop's sole authority. But by the act of submission,† there is no synodical business without the King and they "cannot enact, promulge, or execute any canon, constitution, or ordinance, &c, without the King's most royal licence," on pain of suffering imprisonment, and making a fine at the King's will. Moreover, the King and Parliament (that is, the state) can make laws to bind the clergy, without their consent, but the King and clergy cannot, constitutionally, frame a law, which binds the state.

4. I HAVE remarked the persecuting spirit of the church. Every intelligent reader will easily make a distinction between the genius of an ancient constitution, and

* 1 Edw. VI. c. 12. § 6. 1 El. c. I. § 17.

† 25 Hen. VIII. c. 19.

and the sentiments of the reigning clergy. Far be it from me to indulge any ungenerous passion in my own breast, or to excite it in others! For the cruel maxims of their ancestors, the present clergy are, by no means, accountable: and, indeed, such is the liberality of the present times, that a churchman, giving himself the domineering airs of former periods, sinks himself beneath contempt. At the same time, I think it a misfortune for a generous mind to be entangled with such a constitution. Men, who subject themselves to any authority, under which they act, must frequently yield to its prevailing temper, in opposition to their own sober convictions, and liberal sentiments.

5. NOR should I think I did the Dissenters justice, if I did not guard against an improper use of an hint on the intolerant spirit of the ancient Presbyterians, against which I shall ever feel as much indignation, as against that of the opposite party. I am sure I say the truth, when I affirm, that "Presbyterianism hath no existence among them. They who, very improperly are called Presbyterians, as consistent Protestants, and as genuine advocates for liberty, have no rivals, and few equals." But I know not with what ungenerous designs some writers have been very much disposed to confound them. And yet I will affirm, they are as distinct characters, as the Fifth Monarchy men, and Episcopalians.

C H A P. V.

The Clergy are not represented as an Ecclesiastical Body, nor is the Church an Essential Part of the English Constitution.

A SHORT discussion of these two positions will tend, perhaps, to illustrate some of the preceeding remarks.—And, in order to take a fair view of the subject, it may not be amiss to make a reflection or two on Parliaments, and the different properties of the different assemblies of the clergy.

I DO not think it necessary to remark, that the term Parliament is of French extraction; nor shall I go out of the way to expose the folly of those, who have asserted we had no parliaments before the “conquest;” aiming, good men! after giving a blundering account of that period, to make even our Parliaments which we have been taught to view, as the fortresses of our liberties, the ensigns of our slavery.

I HAVE already observed, without entering on a dispute about the term, that the thing existed among the ancient Germans, and, that as our Saxon ancestors had
their

their councils of the wise men, so also our more early ancestors, the Britons, had their kyfr ythens, † and were directed by a similar polity: indeed, they were coeval with our constitution. Not to go over the same ground again, I observe that as we had Parliaments, long before we had Bishops, so afterwards, though the King and commons could form a Parliament, and make laws, without the Bishops and Lords, yet in the absence of the commons, no Parliament could be held: for which, in a very ancient manuscript, containing some of our old laws, entitled, "the manner of holding Parliaments," * the following reason is assigned, "that Kings held Parliaments and councils with their people, before any Bishops or Lords were made." Hence it was, that the commons thought themselves justified in a certain case, in suppressing the house of Peers, which Milton justifies in that instance, "that having been too much at the King's beck, they might not be judges of a free people." †

I MENTION these circumstances, not through any predilection for a democracy, but to shew the bias of our constitution. For, though I think with Mr. Locke, "That there remains inherent in the people a supreme power to remove or alter the legislative, when they find the legislative act contrary to the trust reposed in them: (for, when such trust is abused it is thereby forfeited, and devolves to those, who gave it.)" || Yet it is my deliberate judgement, that a free monarchy is best suited to the genius of this country, and that well administered, it is the wisest, safest, and most durable scheme of government in

† Concil. Brit.

* Modus Habendi Parliamenta. Vid. Miltoni Pop. Angl. Def. Cap. VIII.

† Pop. Ang. Def. || On Gov. Part II. Sect. 149.

in the world: "It creates and preserves, as our great lawyer† beautifully expresses it, that gradual scale of dignity which proceeds from the peasant to the prince; rising like a pyramid from a broad foundation, and diminishing to a point as it rises. It is this ascending and contracting proportion, that adds stability to any government; for when the departure is sudden, from one extreme to another, we may pronounce, that state to be precarious." This august assembly (for anciently they sat in one house,) was known among our Saxon ancestors, by a term expressive of that deliberate wisdom, which ought to preside in the supreme authority of a nation, it was also stiled the "common council of the kingdom, the great council of the King, the great court, the convention of the nobles, and chiefs, the general assize, and the community of the kingdom of England." Of which great council it hath been said, "If you consider its age, it is most ancient, if its dignity, it is most honourable, if its jurisdiction, it is transcendant and absolute; it alone can, (I mean the high court of parliament, composed of Kings, Lords, and Commons) make law, and that which is law, it can make no law." Giving, however, proper allowances for the irregular seasons of our constitution, and that right, which every government hath, of reverting in any emergencies, to its original, fundamental and immutable principles.

THE assemblies of the clergy were, anciently, of two kinds: of which the former may be called "parliamentary conventions," afterwards exchanged for "convocations," which in their end and constitution were merely of a civil

† Blackstone, Book I. Ch. 2, P. 158. Eighth Edit,

civil nature, the other were "diocesan synods," and provincial councils" which treated only of spiritual matters. Synods were, perhaps, coeval with the establishment of christianity in this Island, and when the greater division was formed, the Archbishops exercised in their provinces the same power, which the Bishops did in their respective dioceses. The origin of the parliamentary assemblies of the clergy, was as follows.

LONG before Bishops were insinuated into our government, Kings, as I hinted before, held parliaments, and formed consultations with their people. But when christianity had got a settlement among us, our pious ancestors, to requite their spiritual services, gave large temporal possessions to the Bishops and clergy. From considerations of piety, as well as prudence, (for the clergy had all the little learning of those times,) they, also, resigned to them most of the great offices of state. Hence, they were admitted into the great council of the nation, and had a considerable influence in the management of public affairs. But our ancestors also perceived the justice of assigning a part of the public burdens to those, who had so large a proportion of the public treasure. Prior, therefore, to the alteration of their tenures by the Conqueror, who laid further services on them, their property was liable to a three-fold tax of "Castles, Bridges and Expeditions."

As yet, however, the Bishops and Prelates only were admitted into our state councils. But the inferior clergy also had large temporal possessions. There was, therefore, the same reason for their contributing proportion-

ably, to the exigencies of the state. The following expedients were, therefore, formed, The Pope used to impose a tax on them, to supply the King's necessities, and they were obliged to pay it. At other times, on any emergency, the Bishops would raise "a benevolence" from their clergy, and the King was accustomed to remit letters of security, that what was granted in a way of favour, might not, in future, be demanded in a way of obligation.

It is, therefore, obvious, that the supplies of the Prince would depend on the beck of the Pope, and would, sometimes, be forced to yield to the humours and caprices of the clergy. They would, of course, be precarious. A more permanent and productive method was, therefore, to be found out: and Edward the first adopted the following measure.

WHEN he summoned his parliament, the greater clergy were also ordered to attend, by the customary method of issuing a writ. A new clause, was, therefore, inserted in it, called the *præmunientes* clause, requiring him, to cite some of the inferior clergy to attend them in parliament, "to grant him aids in the name of the whole body of the clergy."† They accordingly used, from this time, to attend parliament, had a share in the legislature, and formed a separate estate, though in civil matters their consent was frequently not asked, and even their dissent was frequently superseded. "The exercise of their negative,* otherwise than in ecclesiastical matters, is not so clearly handed down to us." Of the inefficacy of their dissent

† Wake's State of the Cler. & Ch. of Eng. * Alliance.

dissent in civil affairs, there is a remarkable instance in the parliamentary rolls, in the third year of Richard the II.† and even in affairs, which related more immediately to the church, if they interfered with the interest of the state, their remonstrances were overruled by the King and parliament. Indeed, they were not always summoned even to attend the great council, which circumstance, though it may, in part, be accounted for, by considering these, as “the irregular seasons of the constitution,” yet is it certain, that they always considered their attendance, as a burden, and were never easy, till they were fairly released from it.

ACCORDINGLY, from the time of Richard the second, the clergy were allowed to meet in “convocation,” our princes not being disposed to dispute the place of their assembling, provided their necessities could be effectually supplied. Instead, therefore, of taxing themselves, and having a share, in the great council of the nation, as a separate estate of parliament, they were allowed to tax themselves in “convocation,” an assembly formed purely for state purposes, called together by the King’s writ, meeting at the time the parliament sat, and waiting on the King’s necessities: a distinct assembly from a synod, as I hinted before, which was called together by the Bishop’s sole authority, and was concerned only in the affairs of the church. Now the period of the clergy’s losing their consideration in parliament, is to be dated from the time, when they first granted their supplies in
convo-

† Rot. Parl. 3 Rich. II. No. 38. Wake, ut sup. Chap. I. Sect. 3.

convocation; for, though they occasionally sent a few proctors to parliament, the situation, to which they had reduced themselves, lost them their parliamentary character, which they never afterwards regained. So that, in fact, they had little reason, to triumph in the great point, which they had secured: having sunk in real dignity, and legal consideration, in proportion as they advanced in usurpation, and rose in the scale of imaginary freedom.

To remove every suspicion of partiality, in what I have here advanced, I beg leave to remind the reader, that I have herein followed, principally, the judgement of two celebrated Prelates.† It will, however, be recollected that Judge Blackstone is inclined to speak of the spiritual Lords as a distinct estate; "because" says he, "they are so considered in the eye of the law, and are so distinguished in most of our acts of parliaments."* If however, the facts, which I have stated, be true, that character is now really lost, though it is a very common thing to retain certain formularities in acts of parliament, when the thing itself, which gave birth to them, hath long since expired. Indeed, the learned Judge himself does virtually confess this, for he adds, "yet in practice they are usually blended together under the one name of "the lords," they intermix with their votes; and the majority of such intermixture joins both estates."

It

† Wake and Warburton.

* Commentaries of the Laws of England. Vol. I. Book I. C. 2. p. 156. Eighth Edit.

It hath also been thought, and he himself seems to think, not without reason, that their having no negative voice, and no distinct house for deliberation, deprives them of the reality of a third estate. Besides, that the numbers are now too few, to make them the representatives of the body of the clergy, on the feudal plan.

I HAVE said in a former place, that the Bishops are not Peers of the realm, but Lords of parliament; wherein I followed the authority of the aforesaid eminent person. As our most respectable lawyers, Selden, chief Justice Hales, and Blackstone have formed different determinations on this question, and as the present Inquiry is not materially affected by it, it would, perhaps, be my prudence, to avoid meddling with it. I will, however, take the liberty of making a few remarks on this subject.

SIR Henry Spelman under the article Pares, or Peers, distinguishes them into those, who live in their feuds in an equal condition, and those, who are equals in the same courts.† The author of the Alliance quotes thus far, but to have done justice to the subject, he ought, I think, to have taken in what follows: the learned Knight goes on “And all are called Peers, or equals in a court, because in the court of that Lord, whose vassals they are, “they have an equal authority,” as the vassals of

† Pares, &c. qui feudis pari lege vivunt; & Pares Curia, quod in curia domini illius, cujus sunt vassalli, parem habent potestatem, scilicet, &c. — The latter he thus describes at the beginning of this article, Pares Curia sunt, qui in eadem curia sive Regis, sive Comitis, sive Baronis, “pari funguntur potestate, parique lege & conditione” vivunt, Gloss. Arch. Tit. Pares.

of the King in the great court of the realm, the vassals of the Earl in the court of an Earl, the vassals of a Baron in the court of a Baron. They took cognizance of all causes pertaining to the court of their Lord, and to their mutual interests, in any question, which respected their feud, and breaking fealty towards their Lord." "For," continues he, "by ancient right, they were bound to be present with their feudal Lord in all weighty causes."

Now the Bishop makes the living by an equal law or in an equal condition, (*"pari lege vivere,"* or as Sir H. Spelman, had said before, *"pari lege et conditione,"* distinguishing it from *"pari potestate"*) he makes this, I say, of the essence of feudal peerage, which will therefore hardly apply to the Bishop's argument, for the tenure of the clergy differing, (holding their lands in free alms, or frank almoigne) so also did their service, they did no homage, or fealty, or indeed "any earthly or temporal service:"† which rendered their condition very different from the laity, from whom such services, according to their tenures, were exacted.

BESIDES, his argument appears to me defective on another ground. For if his distinction prove any thing, it proves too much. In ancient times, the great assembly, composed of clergy and people, *"tam cleri, quam populi,"*‖ among other titles was called the "common council

† For which Littleton gives the following reason, "Therefore they shall do no fealty to their Lord, because that this divine service is better before God, than any doing of fealty." For as he had said before, *"Et tiels que tiegnont en frank almoigne sont oblige de droit devant de Dieu"*

‖ Concil, Brit. 161,

council of the elders, or nobles, and people of the whole Kingdom," so that all the Frilingi or Freemen were, in this sense Pares, or Peers. In our books of ancient laws the Commons are not only stiled barons, but frequently Peers of the Parliament, particularly in the ancient manuscript, referred to above, in which are these words. "There shall be chosen out of all the Peers of the realm, five and twenty persons, of whom five shall be Knights, five Citizens, and five Burgeses, and two Knights of a county have a greater vote in granting and rejecting, than the greatest Earl in England,"† They, therefore, were Peers in the former sense, though not in the latter, except he would have the commons Peers.

WILLIAM, commonly called the Conqueror, altered and new modelled the feudal tenures of this country. He divided the whole land among his nobles; who holding of the King in chief, by the service of barony, were therefore enrolled in the "doomsday book," as the King's barons, and the barons of the Kingdom. The tenures of the clergy, also, underwent the same change, who having hitherto held in free alms, did from that time, in common with the laity, hold by barony. Now one great privilege of barony was, a trial by their peerage: * a privilege, indeed, of very great antiquity,|| and justly esteemed

Dieu de faire orisons, prières, messes, & autres divine services purs les almes de leur grantor ou feoff." Instit. of the Laws of Engl. Lib. II. Sect. 135. By Coke.

* Modus Habendi Parliamenta. Miltoni Def. pro Pop. Angl.

* Barones autem per pares suos debent judicari. Jura et Consuet. norm. co. 9. fol. 2. 6. col. 2.

|| Parium originem vel a Gallorum ambactis apud Cæsarem,

esteemed the pride of Englishmen.† And since, in the most weighty concerns, the Bishops are not in possession of this great privilege, (for, in capital cases, they are tried by the commons, nor can they sit in judgement on Peers,) many very able lawyers have concluded that they are not properly entitled to the character of peerage. Sir Edward Coke gives them the same appellation, as Judge Blackstone, viz. Lords of Parliament, §

BISHOP Warburton, in proof of the contrary position, hath zealously contended, "that a title to peerage does not depend on their judging, or being judged:"* or that if it does, the conclusion is equally strong, that they are Peers, because, in misdemeanors they have a common right of trial with those, who have an undisputed claim to that title. But the Bishop has gone further, he has asserted, that the Bishops were once in actual possession of this privilege, and undertook to shew, by what means they lost it. He seems also to think, that Henry the eighth, would have "restored to them this high privilege, (which he supposes they once had) of being hanged by the lords," if Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, his personal enemy, had not been the first episcopal culprit.

HOWEVER

farem, vel a centenis apud Tacitum comitibus, qui per pagos suos jus dicebant, et Principi Consilium aderant: vel eo altius a centumviralibus iudicibus apud Romanos, non inepte repeto. Spelmanni Glos. p. 448.

† Nullus liber homo rapiatur, vel imprisonetur, &c. nisi per legale iudicium Parium suorum, &c. Mag. Char. Cap. 30.

§ Coke upon Littleton, Frank almoigne. Lib. II, Cap. 6, Sect. 137.

* Alliance, &c. Book II. Chap. 2.

HOWEVER, I cannot help remarking one concession, which he has made, viz. "that, if ever the prelates endangered their peerage, it was, when submitting to canons, against laws, they acknowledged the Pope their "seignour suverain." Which was actually the case, by his own testimony, in that instance, wherein the Bishops were screened from the sentence of the civil judges; and, as this privilege was not restored to them, after they returned to their obedience, at the Reformation, he seems to me to have weakened, undesignedly, his own argument, by the same mode of reasoning, with which he had, before, effectually destroyed the notion of the clergy's being "now an estate of Parliament."

BUT how far Bishop Warburton hath established the peerage of the Bishops, or, how far he has failed in argument, I leave to the determination of wiser heads. It is a matter of mere curiosity, and does not in the least affect my present question; provided their baronies which the aforesaid writer considers, as tantamount to peerages,* be acknowledged to be mere lay possessions, though assigned to spiritual men: which he readily admits. I will, however, just add, that little can be determined, I think, on their parliamentary peerage from titles of honour, which lie even in the statutes of the realm, (on which Bishop Warburton lays great stress,)+ frequently expressed in terms of mere courtesy. Nor need it surprize us, (without noticing the vagueness of the term Peer, which in

"ancient"

* Sir Henry Spelman seems to be of the same judgment. Gloss. Tit. Baro. p. 68. He speaks of Bishops among Barones, qui inter Pares regni numerantur.

† Alliance, Book II. Chap. III. p. 113.

“ancient” times, was nearly as undeterminate as its kindred, Baron§) that spiritual Lords, sitting in the same house with lay, should, in subsequent periods, by courtesy of parliament, receive the same title, though it should not be acknowledged to be a legal one.*

BUT there is another title, under which Bishop Warburton chooses to consider the Bishops, viz. that of “guardian barons.” Being qualified to sit in the House of Lords, by virtue of their baronies, they are viewed by our constitution, he thinks, not indeed, “as representatives of the church,” but, “as ecclesiastical persons, sitting in behalf of religion,” that is, agreeably with his system, to guard against every encroachment, on what, he with too great confidence, calls the rights of the church. (*Ne quid detrimenti ecclesia capiat.*) Which, in fact, in modern times, not only include the rights of the church, properly so called, secured to it by the first clause † of Magna Charta, (tho’ some are resigned by the act of submission) but also many rights of the people, founded on the principles of that palladium of British liberty.

Now, whatever he may infer from the courtesy of some of our statutes, and whatever title he may assume for his political Bishops, to make them appear under a character, which suits his own system, (of which the best I can say, is, that it is founded upon a fiction,) yet it

§ Spelman. in Art. Baro et Pares.

* In the Statutes the King is called our Lord; the Parliament is called the King’s Parliament, and the Laws are called the King’s Laws: yet this is all mere courtesy. Vid. Miltoni. Def. pro Pop. Angl. Cap. VIII.

† Quod Ecclesia sit libera, &c.

is sufficient for my purpose, that it is “no constitutional or legal title.” The old custom of sending writs to the “guardians of the spiritualities,” in the vacancy of a see, to attend parliament, he thinks a plain declaration, that our constitution views them as ecclesiastical persons, sitting in behalf of religion. Which conclusion is drawn, I think, somewhat too hastily, from an inaccurate application of this title “the guardians of the spiritualities;” which relates clearly to the character of the persons, supplying the place of Bishops, and not to the character of the Bishops in the House of Lords, where they sit, even by his own acknowledgment, in virtue of their temporalities. However, I do not feel myself disposed to strip his prelates of this fictitious title, it being a character, to which they have, at least, this claim; that they have, with tolerable management, guarded those encroachments, which, with great assurance, have been called the rights of the church, while the guardians of the constitution have been labouring to restore to their constituents the unforfeited rights of Britons.

THUS much, at present, for this famous work, “the Alliance,” (which I shall have occasion to introduce again) a performance, though, I confess, ingenious, learned, and elaborate in its execution, yet, I must be allowed to say, degrading to the pure unmixed designs of christianity, and in many instances, inconsistent with the original, fundamental, and immutable principles of the British Constitution.†

IN

† I do not speak here of those parts, in particular, of this work, which I have been just considering; but of those, wherein

IN brief, what I would say then, is this, that the clergy, though they once formed a "third estate of parliament," have now lost that character; that the Bishops do not now sit in the House of Lords, as Bishops, or as representatives of the body of the clergy, but as barons; that consequently, the clergy, now, as an ecclesiastical body, are not only no estate in parliament, but not even represented in parliament: for, they can neither sit in the House of Commons, and though indeed represented there, yet is it by virtue of their tithes, or other ecclesiastical dues; which, whether they be held by the clergy, or lay impropriators, are always freehold estates; though even the lands, from whence they arise, be of an inferior character. § So that they are represented only in common with, and in the same manner as, the laity, who are freeholders. They are a spiritual body only in convocation: and yet when so assembled, they are not, at the same time, a civil body even there, having now lost the power of taxing themselves: which character they retained in convocation, after they had lost it in parliament. ‡ And even for this, Britons ought to sing, *Te, Deus, Laudamus.*

I WILL beg leave just to obviate an objection which may be made to what I have said (p. 192, 193.) On

"convo-
wherein he speaks of the benefits, which the church derives, by resigning what he is pleased to call her independence, (which I have called a fiction,) and forming an alliance with the state; and, particularly, where he speaks (Book III.) of "the test law."

§ Blackstone's Law Tracts. Considerations on Copyholders, p. 208. Third Edit.

‡ Warburton,

“convocations;” which I considered, “in their end and constitution as merely of a civil nature.” It may be suggested, then, that synodical, that is, ecclesiastical business, was frequently transacted there. This is true: for which a learned prelate, in a very easy and natural manner, hath thus accounted.† It was no unusual thing, then, when the clergy were assembled in convocation for state purposes, by the *præmunientes* clause in the King’s Writ, for the Bishop, to save the time and trouble of assembling a synod, to issue at the same time another summons, (issued, as I have said before, by his episcopal authority) which constituted them, likewise, an ecclesiastical assembly; and further, he would sometimes drop the formality of the summons: and though assembled, intentionally, for civil purposes, the clergy, by the Bishop’s authority, would proceed to ecclesiastical: thus they were at the same time, a convocation, by the King’s Writ, and a synod, by the Bishop’s summons; and would consequently, without further trouble, transact, at once, civil and ecclesiastical matters.

I NOW proceed to my other position, which was, that “The church is no Essential Part of the English Constitution.”

FIRST, then, it will be necessary to distinguish between the original and fundamental principles of any particular government, and those laws, which are accidental and circumstantial. By the former are meant
such

† Wake’s State of the Clergy and Church of England, Chap, I. Sect, 12.

such principles, as compose the essence of the constitution; which, therefore, cannot be changed without destroying it. The latter, depending on contingencies may alter, without affecting the constitution, varying with times and seasons, and following the wants of society. Fundamental principles, therefore, are the original basis of the government, the other the materials, which compose the edifice; and are so far safe, and so far only, as they are supported by the basis: they are the root, the other the branches, which are then only natural, when they receive strength and nourishment from the parent root: which fundamental laws have given birth to “what, by being giving to all in general, has been called the common law.” †

THE following, then, are the fundamental maxims of the English law, which though mentioned before, it may not be amiss to repeat here. 1. The people have a right to a free enjoyment of life, liberty and property. 2. A right to make those laws, by which they are governed. 3. A right to share in that power, which puts the laws in execution. To these I may be allowed to add the excellent maxim of good King Edward, which hath ever been deemed a fundamental in our law, That if any law or custom be contrary to the law of God, of nature, or of reason, it ought to be looked upon as null and void. And though, in order to guard against the forwardness of private reason, our law is called “legal reason” (*quod est summa ratio*), “because by many ages it has been fined and refined by an infinite number of grave
and

† *Mirroure. Chap. I. Sect. 1.*

and learned men, as Sir Edward Coke speaks: * yet these fundamentals are always supposed to make part of this legal reason, expressing as they do, not the sentiments of individuals, but of the Constitution itself. So that the translator of the *Mirroure* did not speak at large in saying, "As Cicero was bold to derive the pedigree of the Roman law from the great god Jupiter, so I hope, I may be emboldened, in the person of the common law, to say, "That when the laws of God and reason came into England, then came I." †

THESE principles may be ascertained and established by an historical deduction. From whence it will appear, that the Constitution of England is of a genius, very different from what some would have us believe; that a King of England, is one that rules by law, and that the laws of England are directed to the public interest, encouraged, and secured by these fundamentals.

THE features of liberty, which so strongly marked the more advanced age of our constitution, discover themselves, though more faintly, in its very infancy. Christianity, very ancient writers inform us, was preached in this island during the apostolic age, and, if we may credit them, by the Apostles themselves. † The maxims and manners of the first preachers were copied from the TEACHER OF TRUTH, the great EXAMPLAR OF MORALS: they had no wealth to purchase disciples, no secular authority,

* Coke upon Littleton. Lib. II. Sect. 138.

† Pref. to the *Mirroure*.

‡ Gildas Badonicus, Gildas Albanicus, and Will. Malmesbur. &c. Vid. Concil. Brit. De Exordio Christianae Relig. in Britanniiis.

thority, to enforce their instructions; but wholly intent on making men wise and good, they had neither power or inclination, to deface their liberties.

WE are, however told, that the light of truth almost went out, after the death of those, who first kindled it. But Lucius, King of Britain, having received an honourable account of the Christians of Rome, and other countries, wrote to Eleutherius, (then Bishop of Rome) requesting, that teachers might be sent into this island, to instruct his people in the christian faith. Accordingly, two preachers came into Britain; the King himself was baptized, and the people followed his example. How far religion interwove itself with their government, I shall not inquire, nor, indeed, can it be well ascertained. The Saxons got possession of the island, destroyed the churches of the Christians, and introduced their own superstitions, while the Britons retired into the mountainous parts of Wales and Cornwall. ||

IN the fifth century, Austin the monk appeared in Britain, being sent here by Pope Gregory the great. The religion of this monk was of a domineering character. He had a commission "to bring all the priests into subjection."* The Bishops and clergy who retired on the approach of the Saxons, opposed his pretensions. But, being at length Metropolitan of Britain, he

|| Concil. Brit.

* Tua ergo fraternitas non solum eos Episcopos, quos ordinaverit, neque eos tantummodo, qui per Eboracensem Episcopum fuerint ordinati, sed etiam "omnes Britanniae sacerdotes habeat, Domino Deo nostro Jesu Christo auctore, subiectos." Gregorius Augustino Episcopo Anglorum. Concil. Brit. p. 90.

he assembled a synod on the confines of their country. They refused to obey the Roman Pontiff, on Austin's demand, and twelve hundred British monks were slaughtered, through his instrumentality.† But, however, Athelbert, King of Kent, having become his convert, monkery insinuated itself into the government; and the Saxon Kings, afterwards, made ordinances, "that men should worship their Creator, according to the points of the Christian Faith."*

BUT "300 years before Austin sat his foot on English ground," Britons had among them the principles of liberty; and these fundamentals of the English government were also preserved, among the Saxons. In a famous council held by Athelstan, the Saxon King thus pleads with the people, "Seeing I liberally allow you all things, that are your's by your law, that you in like manner may grant to me what is mine, &c."‡ From which words, as Mr. Pen justly remarks, three things are observable; First, that something was "theirs," which nobody else could dispose of. Secondly, that they had "property" by their own law, therefore had a share in making their own laws. Thirdly, that the law was "umpire" between King and people."† And the Saxon Kings took an oath at their entrance upon the government, "to maintain and rule according to the laws of the land."

A TENDER

† Synodus Wigorniensis, in Concil. Brit. p. 104.

* Mirrour, Chap. I. Sect. 3.

‡ Concil. celebre Gratel, &c. Concil. Brit. p. 398.

† Pen's Select Works. Vol. III, England's Present Interest Considered, p. 205.

A TENDER and sacred regard, was preserved towards whatever related to life, liberty, and property. The Saxons had juries. Alfred put one of his judges to death, for pronouncing sentence, on a verdict, (corruptly procured) three of the jury being in the negative. Another of his judges suffered death, for passing sentence on a man, upon an *ignoramus* returned by the jury: and a third also was condemned to die, for having passed sentence upon an inquest taken *ex officio*.

It was a law of Alfred's, "That if a man should imprison his vassal or bondman, his purgation should not be less than the payment of ten shillings;" a sum exceeding ten pounds of modern money. Indeed, imprisonment was practiced very little among the Saxons. "In a common prison, says the author of the *Mirroure*, none ought to be put, if he be not attainted of an offence, that requireth death."† And the same author tells us, that all unjust imprisonment was reckoned manslaughter: he also adds, "Into the offence of manslaughter fall all those, by whom a man dyeth in prison, and that may be, either by the judge, who delayeth to do justice, or by dureness of the keepers, or by other unjustifiable methods."* Debts, and damages, were recovered by receiving their equal value in goods, or else in money; and if payment was not yet made, the land also was extended; and last of all, if full satisfaction was not yet made, the defendant's arms were seized, and he himself was thrown on the benevolence of his friends for support. But no person could be imprisoned for debt. ||

The

† Chap. I. Sect. 9.

* On Manslaughter. Sect. 9. ut sup.

|| *Mirroure*. Defects of the great Charter. Book V. Sect. 2.

The same tender regard was maintained towards property; and, indeed, "from the constitutions of the ancient Kings" preserved in the aforesaid book, the *Mirroure*, written in Edward the first's reign, it is manifest, that they were directed to an impartial administration of justice, and a free enjoyment of property; and though some allowances will be made for the harsh terms of the tenures of those times, yet the great fundamentals of the English government were preserved.

NOR were these grounds and rules of British liberty destroyed by the Norman Duke; of whom it may be said, that as he rather altered, than new modelled the feudal tenures,† so he rather made some additions to the edifice, than removed the basis of our constitution. Indeed, the strength of the nation was not so exhausted at the battle of Hastings, that the people should have been eager to receive a conqueror on his own terms. They chose, as Milton expresses it, to accept of a King, rather than be under a Conqueror and Tyrant. They accordingly, swore to him to be his liegemen, and he swore to them at the altar, to carry them as a "good King ought to do, in all respects." He afterwards broke his word; when the English, tenacious of their character, flew to arms: and the King was obliged to renew his oath on the holy evangelists, that he would govern them "according to the ancient laws of England." If he, therefore, oppressed the nation afterwards, he did it, as Milton expresses it, by right of perjury, not of conquest. And, that he himself admitted this claim of English liberty, is apparent from these words at his death, "I appoint

no

† Hurd's Dialogues. Dial. V. p. 129. Fifth Edit.

no man, said he, to inherit the kingdom of England. † And, indeed, that very learned antiquarian, Sir H. Spelman gives us a very different account of that proud title, Conquestor, from what hath been given us by many writers. “William the first,” says he, “was not called the Conqueror, (conquestor) from subduing, but from acquiring England.*” The people were, therefore, left in possession of their ancient laws, and a right of trial by juries; and in regard to property, in one of the first laws made in his reign, after holding forth, that “the lands of the inhabitants of this kingdom were granted to them in inheritance of the King, and by the common council of the whole kingdom,” it is added, That they shall hold their lands and tenements well or quietly, and in peace, from all unjust tax or tillage. ‖ So that these fundamental maxims of English law were provided for, in the Norman settlement.

THEY were also held sacred in the following reigns, till invaded by King John; who was, however, forced from his encroachment by his barons, and brought back to the ancient standard, at the famous congress at Runningmede. On the articles of agreement there formed, the great Charter of England was founded; which was amended in the infancy of Henry the third, and, after having escaped many dangers, received the support of his maturer age: till, at length it found a final establishment

† Miltoni Def. pro Pop. Angl.

* Gulielmus I. qui a conquirendo, hoc est, acquirendo Angliam, non a subigendo, ut plerique censent, dictus est Conquestor. &c. Gloss, Arch, Parliametum. p. 450.

‖ Ll Gulielm. 55.

establishment in the reign of Edward the first. And so expressive of the genuine principles of the English constitution, and so essential to the happiness of their posterity, was this venerable charter deemed by our ancestors, that it hath been ratified by no less than thirty two acts of parliament. †

THESE fundamentals are the basis of the great Charter itself: and in the same manner, as the latter existed, prior to "the declaration of rights," so these grounds of British liberty were laid, antecedent to the establishment of Magna Charta. And of this original institution of our government, and its subsequent declaration at Runnymede, it may, without offering violence to truth, be said, that they respect not articles of faith, or forms of worship, but civil privileges only; and that the liberties of the church are no further concerned in either than as they respect their temporalities. *

FROM what has been said, it will follow, that these fundamentals of English law cannot constitutionally be removed. Not by the King in his single capacity: for, as he receives his crown under a stipulation, to rule by the laws of the land, so, neither can he, individually, enact a new law. Not by the clergy, in their ecclesiastical capacity: for, as they act by delegation, from the crown, their power cannot exceed their commission; and a power which the crown possesses not itself, it cannot give

† Blackstone's Introduction to Magna Charta, Law Tracts.

* England's Present Interest Considered, p. 228. Pen's Select Works. Vol. III.

give in trust to others. And further still, not even by the parliament, in their legislative capacity: for, notwithstanding what is said of the transcendant and absolute powers, of the “omnipotence” of parliament, “of its making, and unmaking law,” and the like, yet a constitution is even here supposed; the constitution cannot destroy the constitution: for the powers of parliament are but a trust. And, indeed, the rights, about which these fundamentals are concerned, are, in their very nature, absolute and inalienable. For, as the supreme power can take no part of the people’s property, without their consent, so there are some parts, † which even the people themselves cannot give in trust to a certain degree. Life, and liberty, if I may so speak, are nature’s great property, which THE BEING, under whom we hold, gives us not leave to aliene; so that, in short, the original designs of the English constitution have the same relation to it’s subsequent declarations by acts of parliament, which the fundamental maxims of the law of nature have to laws in general, that is, they are their rules and grounds.

AND upon these principles it is, that “When the legislative shall transgress this fundamental rule of society; and either by ambition, fear, folly, or corruption, endeavour to grasp themselves, or put into the hands of any other, an absolute power over the lives, liberty, and estates

† By the term property here, and in some other places, the reader will observe, I do not mean simply estate, but apply it in the more general sense. For property will respect life, reputation, estate, liberty, and conscience; in short, whatever is justly and properly my own. In this sense Mr. Locke frequently uses the term.

estates of the people, by this breach of trust, they forfeit the power the people put into their hands, for quite contrary ends, and it devolves to the people.”*

AND it is clear, that this is the judgement of the legislature itself, as might be shewn by some acts of parliament, which have repealed others, on this ground, that the repealed statutes were illegal. Not to mention others, there was a statute enacted in the 11th. of Henry the seventh, which was contrary to the free customs of this country, in the important article of juries. “Of which oppressions, as Mr. Pen expresses it, Empson and Dudley were the great actors; but they were hanged for their pains, and that illegal statute repealed in the first of Henry the VIIIth. Ch. 6.”

THE consequence is plain, as the same ingenious and excellent person observes; “Fundamentals give rule to acts of parliament, else, Why was the statute of the 8 Edw. IV. ch. 2. “of liveries and informations, by the discretion of the judges, to stand as an original, and this of the 11th. of Henry the seventh, repealed as illegal? For therefore any thing is unlawful, because it transgresseth a law. But what law can an act of parliament transgress, but that which is fundamental? Therefore, trials by Juries, or lawful judgement of equals, is by acts of parliament confessed to be a fundamental part of our government.”† The same remark will apply to the other two great principles of English liberty.

* Locke on Government, Book II. Ch. XIX. § 222.

† England’s Present Interest Considered.

C H A P. VI.

The same Subject continued.

The Church is no Essential Part of the English Constitution.

HERE then I pause, and take the liberty of asking,
Is the church of England an essential part of the
English Constitution?

“BRITISH civil constitution is a phrase, expressive first, of a natural constitution of rights, native and inherent in the inhabitants of this kingdom, and in all mankind: next, of a body of laws, peculiar to this kingdom, declaratory of these natural rights: and lastly, of a form of making and executing these laws by King, lords, and commons.” *

Now, as the fundamental maxims of English government are expressive of that constitution of rights inherent in all mankind, is it not clear, they stand independant of the church of England, so called? For as the natural rights of mankind are antecedent to any particular regimen

* Robinson's Political Catechism. p. 38.

men of religion, so were the fundamental maxims of English government to the establishment of christianity, among us. Our ancestors, before they were Episcopalians, were Papists; before they were Papists, were Christians; and, even before they were Christians, were Britons. The church of England therefore makes no part of the original institution of this country.

NEXT, constitution is expressive of a body of laws, peculiar to this kingdom, declaratory of natural rights. It is evident, then, that this body of laws stands independant of the church of England, for the same reasons, as fundamental maxims do. For had we not English law, before we had an Episcopal church? And how far subsequent laws, declarative of the intentions of the legislature, are consistent with natural rights, and original institutions, is to be known by an impartial comparison of one with the other. The laws, which relate to the church are only so far constitutional, as they are consistent with the natural and civil rights of the community at large, and regulated by the fundamental maxims of our government. And, to speak my mind freely, I incline to think that the church is a great interruption to this part of the constitution. Have not Britons excellent civil laws, and do they want the aid of ecclesiastical canons? Have they not courts of law and equity, and could they not administer justice without spiritual courts? Are not the natural rights of Britons favoured by the common law of the land? But have not the laws, made in favour of the church, been oppressive to the liberties of the nation?

Suppose

E e

Suppose the church removed, Would there be any of that partiality, which marks the character, and is, indeed, the only thing, which disfigures, weakens and disgraces our government? The church of England, therefore, is not essential to this part of our constitution.

LASTLY, British constitution is expressive of a form of making and executing those laws by King, lords, and commons. Now, Is it not certain, that these, also, existed before the church of England was in being? Can it, therefore, be essential to this part of the constitution? And I have already shewn, that the principles of government introduced by prelacy, are very different from the generous maxims of our civil government.

WHEN the cruel and haughty monk, Austin, commonly called the apostle of England, summoned the British Bishops to attend his synod, the Abbot of Bangor advised them, "if he was a man of God, to follow his directions." "And how," continued the honest Bishops, "shall we prove this." The Abbot replied, "If he is meek and lowly of heart, it is probable, that as he has taken up the yoke of Christ himself, he will also assist you to bear it." But if he be severe and proud, it will be evident, that he comes not from God, and that his words ought not to be regarded by us."† Thus, in behalf of the English constitution, I say, If prelacy, has taught our princes mercy, our nobility condescension, and the representatives, of the people justice, and love of independance, then let Britons be assured, that the church of England, naturally enough afforts with that part of our constitution,

† Synod. Wigorn. Concil. Brit. p. 105.

constitution, which aims to secure these invaluable blessings, "a King ruling by law, the magistracy following, the people free, and the whole society happy." If on the other hand, it has made our princes intolerant, our nobles severe and haughty, and the representatives of the people susceptible of corruption, and regardless, in many instances, of the interest of their constituents, then, let Britons be assured, that the church of England is no essential part of her excellent constitution; but is to be considered as a disease, which has sullied its complexion, and impaired its health.

BUT, in order to make a fair judgement of the weight of the church of England in the constitution, it will be necessary, to consider our government, as a Constitution in church and state: which union of ecclesiastical and civil matters, as it gave both to the old doctrine of "no Bishop, no King," so also does it still give authority to principles, which favour the system, when the doctrine itself is not so popular. A church established by law, and making part of legal administration; a church in alliance with the state, APPLYING ITS UTMOST INFLUENCE IN THE SERVICE OF THE STATE; and in reward of its services, SUPPORTED AND PROTECTED by it;* a church of which the principal executive magistrate is declared the supreme Head; a church, which has poured into its bosom, not only its own peculiar temporalities, but all the civil offices of this country; a church, whose form and doctrine have been reckoned such essential conditions of the act of union between England and Scotland,

* Alliance. Book II. Chap. 3.

Scotland, that an alteration of them would endanger the union; † a church, I say, so authorized, secured, benefited, and important, may easily enough have beguiled people into the popular notion, that church and state were inseparably united; “like two stately pillars, rising, indeed, from different foundations, but bending towards each other, as they rise, and meeting in the center.” ‖

It is true, the church of England is established, and makes a part of legal administration. But it will be recollected, that the church of Rome was in possession of this argument before the church of England. And, indeed, the former had this advantage of the latter, that part of the great charter was spent in behalf of its liberties, and privileges, yet, notwithstanding the sacred regard, possessed by our ancestors for the great charter, the privileges of the clergy were broken in upon, and actually surrendered to Henry the VIIIth. The truth was this, as Mr. Pen justly observes, “those parts that were abrogable or abrogated in the great charter, were never a part of the fundamentals, but hedged in by the clergy, and allowed by the barons upon present emergency.”* This remark of that ingenious writer will apply to the present church, by law established. It is hedged in to serve a present purpose. And, whenever the state shall find, it can do better without its services, there is nothing in our constitution, to render the union immutable and eternal. The church, therefore, is not essential to the constitution, because it is established by law.

INDEED,

† Blackstone's Commentaries. Vol. I. p. 98.

‖ Rotheram's Essay on Establishments.

* England's Present Interest Considered. Pag. 229.

INDEED, there is this difference between the two churches; that the former assumed an independant authority, and even challenged the subjection of the civil magistrate. Whereas, when the Pontiff retired, the prince advanced, it is said, to his proper place. The latter of these assertions, though made by very eminent churchmen, I must be allowed to say, is not strictly true. For neither did christian Emperors, nor the Kings of England assume the title, or exercise the whole powers of "the supreme Head." These were both derived from the forfeited claims of the Roman Pontiff. But, if the power challenged by the Pope, was therefore considered unconstitutional, as being an encroachment on the just authority of the prince, and the ancient rights of the people, this argument will extend still further. For does not the church of England actually lie exposed to the same censure? Have not the great fundamentals of English law been removed in favour of her unjust pretensions? Have not the lives, liberties, and estates of many virtuous citizens been sacrificed at her shrine? And is not the sovereign himself so hedged in by the church, as to be incapable of rewarding the services of some of the best friends to the government? No Englishmen ever swerved from the truth, in presuming that the constitution of his country was founded in justice. And, indeed, this was the language of the legislature itself, in the act of granting a toleration to dissenters; for it went upon this principle, that the former claims of the church were exorbitant and unjust, and the laws, which made nonconformity a crime, were accordingly repealed. It was upon this principle their cause was pleaded so admirably by a
 very

very great lawyer;* and it is on the same ground, that their reasonable requests have been, lately, still further urged by some excellent speakers in the House of Commons.

THE union between England and Scotland is, now, considered an important part of the constitution of this country. Our church establishment is, also, supposed to be in close connection with this union; so as, indeed, to be rendered of a nature almost immutable, lest the union itself should be endangered.† What are, then, the express terms of it?

IN the act of union there is recited an act of the Scotch parliament, enacted for the security of the protestant religion, and presbyterian discipline in Scotland, "By which her Majesty, (Queen Anne) with the advice, &c. doth thereby establish and confirm the said true protestant religion, and the worship, discipline, and government, of this church, to continue without any alteration to the people of this land, to all succeeding generations," &c. and the 5th act of the first parliament of King William and Queen Mary, ratifying the confession of Faith, &c. of the church of Scotland, is also confirmed.

THERE is also inserted in the act of union another act, securing, in like manner, the established religion in England;

* Lord Mansfield's Speech in the House of Lords, in the case of the Chamberlain of London, against Allen Evans, Esq. at the end of Dr. Furneaux's Letters to Judge Blackstone. Second Edit. p. 278.

† Blackstone's Commentaries Vol. I. p. 98,

gland; by which it is enacted, "that an act passed in the 13th. year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, of famous memory, entitled an act for the ministers of the church of England to be of sound religion; and also another act made in the 13th. year of the late King Charles the second, entitled an act for the uniformity of public prayers and administration of sacraments, and other rites and ceremonies, and for establishing the form of making, ordaining, and consecrating Bishops, Priests, and Deacons in the church of England, (other than such clauses in the said acts, or either of them, as have been repealed by any subsequent act or acts of parliament,) and all and singular other acts of parliament now in force, for the establishment and preservation of the church of England, and the doctrine, worship, discipline and government thereof shall remain, and be in full force for ever." And every King of Great Britain, on his accession to the crown, takes an oath at his coronation "to maintain and preserve inviolably the aforesaid settlement both in Scotland and England."

Now as the two acts, inserted in the act of union are two separate acts, made in favour of the two societies, before the union; and as the origin of them proceeded from dangers which one church apprehended from the encroachments of the other, it is evident, they are recited to remove those apprehensions, and as a security against mutual encroachments. So that the two churches, at the time of uniting were in a state of independance on each other, already in possession of mutual privileges. Their end, therefore, in uniting, was not on the one hand to form

form a “*fædus inæquale*,” that is, to give one a præeminence over the other, nor, on the other, to make an incorporate union; this would have made the two churches coalesce into one. It was strictly “*fædus æquale*,” that is, an equal alliance, by which each church or nation retained its peculiar privileges, but guarded against the others encroachments.

Now as the learned Commentator on the Laws of England hath frequently admitted, that the parliament may alter the established religion, the forms and doctrines of either church may be changed, with its own consent, without endangering the union. For the parliament, in the present case, is agent or guardian for the two churches.

THE two nations, therefore, and not the two parliaments, being the contracting parties, and the parliament executing either an express or an implied trust,† either nation might alter its own church, without trespassing on the liberties of the other; being capable, constitutionally, of receding from that part of the stipulation made in its own favour, (agreeable to the nature of all *pacta conventa*, or treaty unions,) though even proclaimed to be immutable.*

AND, indeed, since the union, two acts of the Scotch parliament, have been either altered or repealed, by an act of parliament in England,* and yet the union itself
not

† See Furneaux's Letters to Judge Blackstone. Lett. V. p. 149. Second Edit.

* 9 Anne. Cap. 7.

not affected. The acts alluded to, were, one which exposed persons excommunicated by the church judicatories in Scotland to civil pains and disabilities; the other, entitled "an act against irregular baptisms, and marriages;"* in consequence of which English act of parliament, the Episcopal dissenters received a complete toleration in Scotland, and were admitted to a free participation of all civil and military offices.

AND further still, the act of union hath actually been violated, and yet the union not thereby dissolved. I allude to the act of patronage, which took the right of presentation from the "heretors, and elders of the respective parishes," and actually restored them to the patrons of the livings; which I will be free to call a most considerable infringement on the act of union, and an important advance on the province of a church. For a right of patronage to livings appears to me next in importance to that of making ministers to occupy them. Now, I say, this act must be considered a violation of the act of union; for it is well known the act of patronage passed against the prevailing wishes of the Scotch nation.† Yet even this act has not endangered the union.

REASONINGS, similar to these, may be applied even to the coronation oath itself; by which every King of Great Britain, on his accession to the crown, is bound to maintain and preserve inviolably, the established religion.

AND,

* Made in 1695.

† See Furneaux, ut sup.

AND, as the present forms of our establishment, and doctrines, so, also, its very genius, might be altered, without any encroachment on the union, or injury to the constitution. On the ground of political expedience, it is, certainly, a very defective and partial system: and it must be a strange degree of prejudice, which could incline a christian and an Englishman to call it, the most perfect of all christian establishments.* Nay, I will venture to add, that the alliance between church and state of England might be entirely dissolved, and yet the union between England and Scotland kept sacred and inviolate.

AND, however distant the period, and however fashionable it may be to treat those, as visionaries, who are looking towards it; fully persuaded I am, that such a dissolution must take place. For though I am not so blind, on the one hand, as not to perceive, that our present establishment is a blessing, as a deliverance from papal tyranny, neither am I, on the other, so inattentive to its evils, as not to believe, there is a strength in the British constitution, which, when collected, will throw off the mighty incumbrance; a revolution, which will give this island, called by an ancient poet, for its fertility, "the seat of Ceres;" † a title also, for its mildness, justice and liberality, to the beautiful character given it by our great antiquarian, "The masterpiece of nature, performed when she was in her best and gayest humour." ‡

THE

* Alliance. Book II. Chap. IV.

† ——— ἰδ' εὐρεῖα δώματ' ἀνάσσει
Δημῖν τε.

‡ Cambden. Introduction to his Britannia. p. 5. Second Edit.

THE means, by which the great improvement, (for such, without scruple, I call it) will be brought about, are in the womb of providence: but I will avow, to borrow the words of an ingenious person, (and here I speak the genuine language of my heart) "that if I had the whole Episcopal church, yea, the whole papal community, as much at my disposal, as the most absolute tyrant ever had his slaves, I would not deprive them by force of one article of faith, or one ceremony of worship. I would only oblige them to separate religion from civil and secular affairs."*

NOR let such a notion be reckoned absurd, or extravagant. Thus christianity stood in the early ages. Modest and unassuming in its pretensions, it affected no preeminence, but what truth and virtue gave it: and at the same time, though not meanly subservient to the vices of governors, yet important and useful to government, by the holy doctrines, which it taught, and the spirit of subjection, which it inculcated. Thus, I say, it stood, till Constantine, in the fourth century, took it, as he thought, from obscurity, to give it place and rank in the political system.

NOR do I think it improbable, that christianity existed unentangled with civil government, even in that part of this island, that was over-run with Saxon superstitions. For it is not likely, that a religion, of so penetrating a nature, on its retreat to the west, should have left

* Robinson's Plan of Lectures on the Principles of Nonconformity. Pref, to the Fifth Edition, p. 23.

left no trace behind. Nor need the partial testimony of the monkish historians surprize us, ever zealous to exaggerate the important services of the Roman Pontiff, and to give authority to the mission of the apostle of England. Beda tells us, that Bertha, the wife of King Ethelbert was a christian. It is not natural, therefore, to suppose, there were not many of the same persuasion. †

SUCH, too, was the situation of those christians, who retired into Wales from the Saxon invasions; preserving the christian faith with true British independance.*

THE following is translated from an ancient British manuscript by Sir Henry Spelman. It is the answer of the brave Abbot of Bangor to the haughty demand of the apostle of England.

“BE it known, and without doubt unto you, that we all are, and every one of us, obedient and subject to the church of God, and to the pope of Rome, and to every godly christian, to love every one in his degree, in perfect charity; and to help every one of them by word and deed

† *Erat autem prope ipsam civitatem ad orientem ecclesia in honorem sancti Martini antiquitus facta, dum adhuc Romani Britanniam incolerent, in qua regina, quam Christianam fuisse prædiximus, orare consueverat. Beda. Lib. I. Cap. 25.*

Speaking before of Ethelbert, the same historian adds. *Nam et antea fama ad eum Christianæ religionis pervenerat, ut pote quod et uxorem habebat Christianam de gente Francorum regia, nomine Bertham. Quam ea conditione a parentibus acceperat, ut rituum fidei ac religionis suæ cum Episcopo, quem ei adiutorem fidei dederant nomine Luidhardo, inviolatam servare licentiam haberet.*

* *Gelasius,*

deed to be children of God. And other obedience than this I do not know, due to him, whom you name to be pope, nor to be the Father of fathers, to be claimed, and to be demanded; and this obedience, we are ready to give and to pay to him and to every christian continually. Besides, we are under the government of the Bishop of Caerleon upon us, who is to oversee, under God, over us,|| to cause us to keep the way spiritual."

SIR H. Spelman, after informing his reader, from what ancient manuscript this was translated (which he adds, was undoubtedly an imitation of one more ancient) makes the following reflections.

"THE Abbot of Bangor, who gave this answer to Austin, was without doubt that very famous Dionuthus, of whom we made mention in the last notes. It is also manifest, both from this answer of his, and from what was related before by Beda himself, that the British church acknowledged at this time no subjection, either to the Roman Pontiff himself, or to any other foreign Patriarch, nor cultivated any communion with the Roman church. But it was subject, as it had been from the age of Eleutherius, to its own Metropolitan (as to a Pope or Patriarch of another world) the Archbishop of Caerleon; who, as is here suggested, acknowledged no superior in the degrees of the church: but yn a ligwr dan Daw, that is, "under God, without any intermediate authority" governed the people and church committed to him, and practiced the Eastern and Affrican rites, rather than

|| The same distinction by which the act of supremacy is guarded,

than the Roman. Nor did this proceed from any schismatic perverseness, (which the authors of that age would have undoubtedly censured) nor against the institutions of the holy fathers, confirmed by the authority of the third œcumenic synod held at Ephesus, in the year of our Lord 431.*

C H A P. VII.

Remarks on Mr. Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, and Bishop Warburton's Alliance between Church and State.

IN making a few free remarks on the "judicious Hooker," who possessed more wisdom, humility, † and candour, than a host of those, who have retained his writings, it is not necessary to suppose, I must be influenced either by malevolence or vanity. I do not think myself authorized to adopt the language of the illustrious

* Concil. Brit. p. 10.

† See particularly, Books I. and II. of the Ecclesiastical Polity, sub finem.

ous Montesquieu, "And I also am a painter." ¶ I affect not to raise a structure, in opposition to the goodly fabric of "ecclesiastical polity," or to embellish the inward parts. The only title I claim, is, that of "formarum spectator:" and shall think it no breach of modesty to say, Here the building wanted proportion, and, There the foundation was not strong.

"LAWS, says the latter of these great men, are the necessary relations, resulting from the nature of things."†

THIS is a definition of laws in general. It will follow, that laws should vary, according to the different forms of government, to which they relate, and the passions by which those governments are put in motion; agreeable to this maxim of Montesquieu, that laws should relate to the NATURE and PRINCIPLE of the government. The laws of a democracy for example, where the government is in the hands of the people, must differ from an aristocracy, where the government resides with the few. The reason is, a democracy and an aristocracy being differently constituted, are made to act by different PRINCIPLES. I may add, that the restraining force, or the penalties enforcing laws, should vary in proportion. Rewards and punishments should be regulated by the prevailing principle of a government.

THE same observations, which have been found just, on comparing together different schemes of civil government, will be found to apply, also, to the different circumstances of civil and ecclesiastical government.

IDEAS

¶ Preface to the Spirit of Laws.

† Esprit des Loix, Livr. I. C. 1.

IDEAS of this kind did not escape the penetrating genius of Hooker in his admired first book of Ecclesiastical Polity. "One kind of law, says he, cannot serve all kind of regimen:" what I complain of, is, that the system, which he undertook to defend, contradicts these fundamental maxims.

"Laws, says Hooker, not only teach what is good: they have a constraining force."† And again, "They take not their constraining force from the quality of those, who devise them, but from that power, which giveth them the strength of law."‡ And that, wherever it is lodged, is the supreme power. It is part of this system, therefore, that the supreme power may establish opinions, forms of worship, and plans of discipline; and, as laws imply a constraining force, religion consequently, is enforced by civil penalties. I have nothing to do here, with rites and ceremonies, or christianity. But I affirm, that Mr. Hooker's system opposes this fundamental maxim of all government, "Laws are the necessary relations resulting from the nature of things."

BISHOP Warburton hath stepped in to the support of this system, by acknowledging, indeed, that the province of the civil magistrate is not properly the care of souls, but of bodies; and, consequently, that he hath no right to interfere with religion, (with an exception to the three fundamental maxims of natural religion) as a matter of TRUTH, but of utility; and that if it concern itself with TRUTH, it is only incidentally, by virtue of the ALLIANCE.

This

† Book I. 10. p. 19. 1723. § Ut sup.

This was an ingenious device. The only misfortune was, that Bishop Warburton's system went one way, and FACTS another. For, Who does not know, that truth was the great point, that exercised the genius of legislators, in the sixteenth century, and encouraged Christian states to unite in HARMONIES, and CONFESSIONS of FAITH? Equally ingenious was the distinction, between PUNISMENTS and RESTRAINTS. It is, as if the law should say, I do not harass you, as one, who hath, actually, committed murder; but as one, who may, probably, pull down the steeple. Will a sufferer perceive the distinction?

FACTS, too, are not much more favourable to the notion of the learned Archdeacon of Carlisle, who tells us, the intention of the legislature in imposing Subscription to articles, was merely to exclude from the government the PAPIST, the ANABAPTIST, and the PURITAN.* Why, then, were Free-willers harassed? And why were Arians and Socinians put to death?

MR. Hooker's system, which allows civil magistracy the power "of making laws, yea laws concerning the most SPIRITUAL affairs of the church,"† leaves the objection, which I have started, in all its force.

THIS fundamental error in the Ecclesiastical Polity consists in confounding the nature of law. The next is connected with this, and relates to the administration of

* See Paley's Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy, Vol. 1. On Subscription to Articles.

† Book the VIIIth. Of the Authority of Making Laws. P. 428. 1723,

of law; assigning to those called "the laity" Ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and to those called "spiritual men," a jurisdiction properly civil.

WERE this the proper place, I would observe, that Mr. Hooker in marking out the limits of the spiritual jurisdiction of the church, hath assigned it, I think, too extensive and awful a province. I should hold myself bound to stand aloof from every society in the universe, sooner than bow to a SPIRITUAL tribunal;† I would humble myself in solitude and silence before the GREAT BEING; I would seek forgiveness and consolation from my Maker in the pathless waste. But remarks of this kind must be passed.

BUT, Does there not arise a strange confusion of characters, on supposing a prisoner put to the bar, and on hearing a civil judge gravely ask, Are there three Hyposteses in the divine nature, or one? And on hearing a SPIRITUAL man say, Let the prisoner be taken to Newgate?

MR. Hooker hath given high encomiums to those "reverend, religious, and sacred consultations, which are termed general councils." But Hooker was too good a man, not to distinguish the times and practices of the primitive Christians, from those, "when pride, ambition, and tyranny began, by factious and vile endeavours, to abuse that divine intention unto the furtherance of wicked practices."‡

THIS

† Book VI. || Book I. 10,

THIS distinction was not made without reason. For, were I disposed to exhibit all the human passions of the vicious kind, in their full growth, were I inclined to afford infidels a smile, to cover with shame the face of the Christian world, and to stamp eternal infamy on the Christian name, I would only wish the attention of nations called to the proceedings of the four first general councils: I would only wish to have read aloud to mankind HIS Epistle to the churches, who first established christianity by law; beginning with a determination "to preserve one faith, and sincere charity in the catholic church," and ending with an order, "that if any persons should be found to conceal any book written by Arius, and should not burn it, he himself should be put to death." †

FROM what source have the most violent evils flowed in upon Christendom? From a perversion of this text, "If he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee, as an heathen man and publican." Hence, saints got into the judgement seat, but princes were first to determine who were saints. Jesus taught good politics, as well as good morality: Who made me a ruler or a JUDGE?

HITHERTO I have considered the NATURE, and the ADMINISTRATION of laws. It remains, to consider the AUTHORITY, that makes them.

ALL free states are governed by their own laws. Mr. Hooker, than whom few better understood the nature of civil government, necessarily admitting this fundamental maxim,

† Epist. Constantini Magni, de unanimi Paschatis Observatione, Ex Nicopher. Lib. VIII. Cap. 25,

maxim, was, therefore, obliged to maintain, "that the church and common wealth are not too independant societies; that the church of England, and the people of England, are the same body; there not being any man of the church of England, but the same man is also a member of the common wealth; nor any member of the common wealth, which is not also of the church of England."^{*}

IN regard to the church of England, commonly so called, the former of these positions is certainly true, notwithstanding all the flourishing assertions of Bishop Warburton: and yet, that the church, properly so called, makes no part of the legislative, I have already shewn.

BUT if this position, "the church of England, and the people of England" are the same people, be accurate, methinks it was somewhat curious to see one, or two bishops at most, acting under the authority of a good and sensible little boy, || "DEVISING" at least, what was to bind the whole nation; and King James, actually "GIVING his canons the FORCE of LAW."

BUT is the position itself accurate? "It may be remembered, then, that at first, the greatest part of the learned in the land were either eagerly affected, or favourably inclined the other way."[†] And were the judgement of the most learned men in the land to be now taken, respecting the forms, the doctrine and the discipline of the church, what would be the judgement? I suppose preferments out of the question. It would not be

* Eccles. Pol. Book VIII. p. 407. || Edw. the VIth.

† George Cranmer's Letter to Mr. Hooker, affixed to Hooker's Life.

be for "THE DISCIPLINE." True. But, Would it be for the present forms, and doctrines, and discipline of the church?

BUT further, no sooner was our present regimen denominated the church of England, than some of the people of England dissented from it. The position, therefore, was far from being strictly true, when Mr. Hooker wrote. And it is, certainly, less so now. If this were the case, there should not be a Jew, a Catholic or a Dissenter in the land. But, happily for the British government, there are many of all descriptions. Dissenters are very numerous. It will perhaps be found, that they amount nearly to one fifth of the community: and, as they now have a title in law, † it would not be accurate to say, the church of England, and the people of England are the same people. Bating, however, the too high powers, which Mr. Hooker assigns to the supremacy, this system maintains "the parliament of England hath competent authority to define and determine the churches affairs." *

To which I think it sufficient to reply, the legislature, whose laws protect all men in their religious liberties, hath done its duty, and consulted its own safety.

BUT the laws, which the legislature hath framed relative to religion, are about matters indifferent. § Let them

† Furneaux's Letters to Judge Blackstone. Lett. I. And Lord Mansfield's Speech in the House of Lords, at the end.

* Eccles. Pol. Book VIII. § B. III.

them be left, then, in their indifference, dont make LAWS about them.

BUT WISE MEN are more likely to place indifferent matters in their proper place. Perhaps not. And for this reason, Because they are wise men.

BUT how are the people then capable of doing it? Since Mr. Hooker wrote, at the very time I am writing, the people have given proof, that they are capable of doing it. Shew me a society, assembled under this conviction, that the Deity ought to be worshipped, and I will shew you another, that will be capable of finding out, how he ought to be worshipped.

I HAVE nothing to do here with the questions respecting laws changeable, and unchangeable, † lay-elders, and bishops,* the subordinate headship of the King's of England, and the supreme headship of the Christian Legislator. ‖ I only search for what is conformable to the welfare of society, and of the English government.

THESE remarks, therefore, relate to the principles, on which the system of Ecclesiastical Polity is raised: and from the following considerations I incline to think, I am not very wide of the truth. Mr. Locke was a great admirer of Hooker: and those, who have read the Essays on Civil Government, and on Ecclesiastical Polity, will recollect, that many liberal maxims of Mr. Hooker's, are adopted by Mr. Locke, and are, indeed, interwoven in the texture of his argument. The judicious church-
man

† Book VI, * Book VII, ‖ Book VIII.

man is frequently quoted, as authority, by the incomparable politician. And the latter has given us, perhaps, the best treatise on Civil Government, that was ever presented to the world.

BUT consider the same Locke on a subject that approaches near to the Ecclesiastical Polity; I allude to his Letters on Toleration. Did ever two performances differ more in their conclusions than these celebrated productions? One confounds things which ought to have been kept distinct: the other keeps the distinction accurate and clear. Hooker was an excellent man, but retained in the service of a system, which he defended, I doubt not, from conviction. The immortal Locke had no system. He was not a Divine; but he was an Inquirer after truth. †

MR. Hooker was both Divine and Politician: Bishop Warburton a mere Politician: and if self sufficiency and arrogance tarnish the lustre of characters, the latter is not entitled to that respect, which candour delights to pay the former, amidst all his mistakes. This praise, however, is due to the system of ALLIANCE, that, in laying claim to the principles of liberty, it impeaches the credit of ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY. I, also, am, here, a mere politician; and as two politicians seldom agree,

† *Primo homines, ut tuto ac libere sine vi atque injuriis, vitam agerent, convenere in CIVITATEM, ut sancte et religiose in ECCLESIAM: illa leges, hæc disciplinam habet suam, plane DIVERSAM. Hinc toto orbe Christiano per tot annos bellum ex bello feritur, quod MAGISTRATUS et ECCLESIA inter se OFFICIA confundunt. Miltoni Def. pro. pop. Angl. Pref.*

agree, I shall expose a few of the manœuvres of my brother of the craft, without any ceremony.

I SAY then, that the notion of the churches INDEPENDANCE is built on a weak foundation, and that the ALLIANCE is a "mere fiction." That "Christianity is perfectly free, and independant of the state,"* is granted. But that the church of England hath, or ought to have, such an independance, as the author of the Alliance contends for, will be denied.

FOR, let it be observed, that at the very time the Roman Pontiff exercised supremacy over England, the state had a right to authority over all persons, of whatever religion, clergy, as well as laity, antecedent to any ecclesiastical concessions. A claim, rising out of the very nature of civil government. And as to the churches resigning "the first great branch" of her independence, "that no ecclesiastic of the established church should exercise his function without the magistrate's approbation and allowance,"† this was, surely, no such instance of christian humility. For, What was it, but to give the state, what it had a right to before? The revenues of the church were originally the state's donation; the state, therefore, had an indisputable right to the appointment of church offices, prior to the æra from whence our author dates his Alliance, viz. the Reformation.‖ The church, consequently, had no right to deem herself independant

* Book II. Ch. 4. p. 145. † Book II. Chap. 3. p. 131. I observe once for all, that the Edition of the Alliance, that I quote, is that of Bishop Hurd's, in the Fourth Vol. of Warburton's Works.

‖ 25 Edw. I. 25 Edw, III. Statute of Provisors.

dependant in this respect : a consideration, which materially lessens the dignity of an Alliance, to be formed between two “sovereign, and independant societies.”

BUT, let me take the liberty to ask, When was this Alliance formed? The Bishop tells us, in Edward the VIth's reign. “Then it was, he says, that this Alliance between the protestant church of England, and the state was made; on the natural dissolution of the Alliance between the popish church and it.”† Prudence required the Bishop to take his stand there. But he had before observed, “that the privilege, which the state gained, through the concession of the church was SUPREMACY in MATTERS of religion; the church resigning up her INDEPENDENCY, and making the magistrate her SUPREME HEAD.” Now the magistrate was owned SUPREME HEAD, in Henry the VIIIth's reign, the act of Edward the VIth. did but revive and re-establish the title and powers of Supreme Head, as possessed before the reign of Mary. This great branch of Independance, then, had actually been resigned before the ALLIANCE commenced.*

BESIDES,

† Book II. Chap. IV. p. 141.

* There had been in the early part of our history warm disputes between the Papacy and the Kings of England, concerning their respective privileges. The encroachments of the former had been enormous. From the days of Edward the First, therefore, many statutes had been made, to confine its exactions within some reasonable bounds. These statutes related to investitures, receiving appeals to Rome, and sending legates to England: and by 16 Rich. II. Cap. 5 it was enacted, “that if any did purchase translations, bulls, or other instruments from the court of Rome, against the King, or his crown, or whose-

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ever

BESIDES, considering the church of England as a christian church, she had not the POWERS, of which her "Independence was the consequence," even on the principles of our churchstatesman himself. For though he admits with Hooker, that church DISCIPLINE is changeable, this he must necessarily maintain with some allowances, his system obliging him to admit, that Baptism and the Lord's supper are fixed. He also grants that the DOCTRINE of Christ is "unalterable."† On the principles of Warburton, therefore, the church had not the

ever brought them to England, or did revive, or execute them, they were out of the King's protection, and that they should forfeit their goods and chattels to the King, and their persons should be imprisoned." The proceedings being on a writ, the principal words of which were *præmunire facies*, the aforesaid statute was called the statute of *præmunire*. These statutes, though in force, had been frequently suffered to lie dormant. Henry the VIIIth. resolved to have them put in execution, and brought all the clergy under a *præmunire*. But the King on "a reasonable composition, and full subjection" agreed to pardon them.

Accordingly in a convocation held at Canterbury (anno 1531.) it was agreed to acknowledge the King Protector and supreme Head of the church of England. And in the petition, "the clergy prayed the King to accept 100000*l.* in lieu of all punishments, which they had incurred, by going against the statutes of provisors, and did promise for the future neither to make, nor execute any constitution without the King's licence, upon which he granted them a general pardon: and the convocation of the province of York offering 18840*l.* with another submission of the same nature afterwards, though that met with more opposition, they were pardoned." Burnet's Hist. of the Reformation, Part I. Book II. p. 113. Under these humbling circumstances, then, the clergy took the oath of supremacy; though the supremacy itself was not settled till three years afterwards, viz. anno 1534.

† Postscript to the fourth Edit. p. 300.

the powers of forming "a free convention." She could not part with her independence. Lord Bolingbroke has somewhat mistated Warburton's argument; he has, however, forced out this acknowledgement from the Bishop, "that a christian church is debarred from entering into any such Alliance with the state, as may admit any legislator in Christ's Kingdom but himself, (that is, a power in the magistrate to ALTER DOCTRINES) but no such power, adds he, is granted or usurped by the supremacy of the state (which extends only to DISCIPLINE.)* the unalterable part of the law of Christ being its doctrine." Whether the doctrines have not been altered, will be the subject of a future inquiry; if they have, both parties have exceeded their powers, by "the compact."

To the question, Where this charter, or treaty of convention for the union of the two societies is to be found? The Bishop thought it sufficient to answer, "In the same Archive with the famous original contract between magistrate and people, so much insisted on in the common rights of mankind."† But I own, I am not satisfied with this answer. For the "original compact is the only legitimate foundation of civil society." And this is not all. It is the basis of the British government, and the very language of our constitution speaks out, what the doctrine of an original contract implies. "Something like it, says the Bishop, we say of our ALLIANCE." Things that appear very much alike at a distance, are sometimes widely different, as we approach them. Now this I say of our ALLIANCE. It hath not been formed, nor ought; it is not implied, nor ought; it is not only a
mere

* Ut sup. † Book II. p. 140.
H h 2

mere fiction, but attempts to realize it, have produced practices unjust and unconstitutional. For let it be noted,

THAT the state stipulated, as an article of the Alliance, that the administration of public offices should be appropriated to the church, to the exclusion of the rest of the community.† “These, it seems, were to be considered as a reward for her services,” and a “protection against her enemies.” Now this I say is disgraceful, unjust, unconstitutional; moreover, what is worse still for this political system, ineffective. And to borrow a little Warburtonian self-sufficiency, the doctrine itself is false. For this was no condition in the original Alliance, as he calls it, it was hedged in a century after the famous Alliance was formed; even when the test law was framed; of which more hereafter.

“REWARD, says Bishop Warburton, is not one of the sanctions of civil society.”§ This position is designed to prepare the way for the expediency of a test law, excluding dissenters from places and offices. But I observe a little management with the word Reward. I distinguish between reward and a capacity for receiving it. Every good citizen is capable of this: a good government also is capable of enforcing it, because it CAN distinguish the objects of its favour. The law ought not to say, “Are you a good man?” Are you a good Christian? Here I acknowledge the “motive” should be known. The question, therefore, belongs to a higher tribunal. But civil government can determine this question. Are you a good citizen? For the “motive” need not be known.

A “judicial”

† See Book III, Ch. II. § B. I, Ch. III,

A “judicial” determination, therefore, is not necessary.* Nor is civil society discharged of its debt, when it has afforded mere protection. For while one party possesses all public offices, and the rest are excluded from administration, the services of the former must be paid out of a tax levelled on the latter. All parties contribute to raise the fund, and one only receives out of it. Society is in arrears with the Dissenters.

I OBSERVE a little management, also, with the word SOCIETY. It was expedient for the Bishop to prepare his reader for this profound discovery, that christianity formed a political society. It was, therefore, necessary to lay down this previous maxim, “That religion constitutes a society,” he, accordingly, attacks with vigour the notion, “that religion is a kind of divine philosophy in the mind,” and goes sword in hand equally among “the philosophers,” and the “sectaries.”† We allow great geniuses to act, now and then, the Knight of la Mancha, as does here our renowned church statesman. For most of the philosophers have been advocates for what he calls politicised societies, for the vulgar; though averse to their shackles themselves, from a conviction that “they are founded in error and lies.” And some think, that the sectaries have been zealous for religious societies, to the extreme. Even that “wise sect” (as the sneering Warburton calls the Quakers) admits society into their religion, as our author himself hath exemplified in the case of Mr. Pen, and Mr. Barclay: I also add, that they are a living example of the falshood of his assertion, “That the Quaker abolishes the very being of a church,”‡ for
I admit

* B. I. p. 31, 32. † B. I. II. ‡ B. I. p. 36.

I admit Mr. Locke's definition of a church, in preference to any thing, that the author of the Alliance lays down, viz. "It is a free society of men assembling of their own accord, to pay public worship to God, in that manner, which they believe to be acceptable to the Deity, and tending to promote their salvation." But the sectaries are not "proper societies," that is, as he elsewhere speaks, "policied societies," or "political societies." This is true. And no remark is more true, than that of Rousseau's, "The Christian religion is, at bottom, more hurtful than beneficial, to the firm constitution of the state; substituting only for the Christian religion, the Christian priesthood, that is, political religion."

C H A P. VIII.

Other Objections Answered. Remarks on Mr. Paley.

BEING one of the "fanatic rabble" † who am fully convinced of the futility of the Warburtonian system, I am sorry my limits will not allow me, to consider more at large the arguments of this polite writer. I
proceed

† Postscript to the Fourth Edit, of the Alliance.

proceed to collect together as concisely as possible, other reasons for our present establishment, and some reasons against it.

It is said, then, that the state of society is weak, and solicits the support of religion; that religion is exposed to injury, and requires the protection of the state: † hence is inferred the necessity of an union: that the civil magistrate may choose his religion, as well as individuals: that the state has a right of private judgement: that all religions are constitutional and legal, that are appointed by the state: || that christian emperors overruled religion: that English Kings had an ancient claim on the supremacy: * and that the Jewish polity illustrates the propriety, and confirms the excellency of our ecclesiastical constitution; it being “by pattern of that example, that ecclesiastical causes are by our laws annexed to the crown;” § and that the excellence of our English establishment is, that while it confines civil offices and employments to its own members for security, it gives a free toleration to the rest; allowing liberty of conscience, yet protecting the establishment by a test law. ‡

As a test law is supposed to be the support of an establishment, and an establishment an essential part of civil polity, test laws, and an establishment are said to have a mutual influence on each other, so that the removal of the former would hasten the destruction of the latter.

And

† Alliance. Book I. Chap. III.

|| Rotheram's Essay on Establishments.

* Burnet's Hist. of the Reformation, Part I. p. 106.

§ Eccles. Pol. Book VIII. p. 407.

‡ Alliance. Book III.

And what would be gained? Have not those who have made objections to establishments and test laws, given proof, that they are in pursuit of an Utopia, a scheme contrary to the common sentiments, and the universal practice of mankind? Have not those who have opposed establishments and test laws in one form, been obliged to adopt them in another? The Puritans in Queen Elizabeth's reign made great outcries against Episcopacy; but took the first opportunity of establishing Presbyterianism: they fled from an establishment in England, and formed an establishment in America: even Mr. Pen, it has been said, when he advanced to legislation, found a test law absolutely necessary for the purposes of civil government. † Envy of the ruling party, therefore, is said to be the ground of opposition, rather than a regard to the interests of any particular government.

THERE is another objection, which should be taken in, though it does not properly affect this part of my subject. Some writers then have been ashamed to consider religious establishments, under the character of Alliances with civil magistracy, conceiving that such a notion debases religion, and dishonours government. Without an establishment, however, they suppose, sufficient provision is not made for the interest of religion: and the light, in which they view such an institution, is that of a "scheme of instruction." ‡ This, it is acknowledged, is the most respectable view of establishments, and may appear, perhaps, the capital objection against an entire removal of them.

To

† Alliance. p. 233. ‡ Mr. Paley, Vol. II. p. 303.

To these objections I reply, that as the state of society is weak, and wants the support of religion, every individual should be encouraged to choose his religion, and feel no inconvenience from his choice: the religion, which people choose for themselves, will be personal; and that will give strength to society; all beyond, will weaken it. — Is religion exposed to injury? It is the duty of the civil magistrate to protect her; it is also his interest; if the civil magistrate protect all parties, all parties will have an interest in supporting the magistrate; this reciprocal obligation will create a firm and lasting union; and there will be no occasion to make terms, or strike an unrighteous bargain. Let the civil magistrate choose his religion: but let him not choose a religion for me. But if a state must have a religion, let us not be surprized if it partake of state intrigue, and worldly policy.

THE authority of christian Emperors, and the claims of english Kings must not be admitted as argument, unless it be said, that they always did right, and that their practice is a rule for us. As to the Jewish polity, I would observe, it was of a genius peculiar to itself; controlled by a divine, though invisible sovereign, and directed to a particular object: it was not to have its likeness, for external regimen, in the vast system of human affairs; it could not suit itself, as to its internal principles, to the general wants of civil government. Nor, indeed, had the civil magistrate among the Jews the authority, since assumed by christian Kings. They were, indeed, to keep the law, but they might not alter the DOCTRINES. But, Where is the divine command au-
thorizing,

thorizing, or encouraging an imitation of the Jewish model? And, Where is the people, who have, indeed, copied it? As to the general policy of nations, though it could be shewn, that all states had exhibited some established forms, and public tests, it would only shew us, what had been, not what should be. There have been always cunning men, and dupes. The Puritans in the most violent times acted more agreeably to the principles of the British constitution, than their oppressive adversaries; and the Quakers in Pensylvania exhibited the fairest model of a free toleration, then exhibited to the christian world. But the Puritans had not the most enlarged views of religious liberty; and Mr. Pen, when he framed a test law, the mildest, that had, as yet, been proposed, did yet claim too much. The American in their new constitution, have improved on their ancient plan.†

ADMITTING, for a moment, the necessity of an establishment, a test law, considered as a restraint on Dissenters, is essential neither to its existence, or strength. Holland, Germany, Russia, and, of late years, even France afford proofs to the contrary.* Scotland and Ireland too throw a considerable weight into the scale. We have been told by a prelate of Ireland, that the preservation of the established church was owing to the conduct of Dissenters. In England, also, we had an establishment before we had a test law, and since a test law was

† See pag. 255 of this Inquiry. Notes.

* Right of Protestant Dissenters to a complete Toleration. Chap. IV.

was framed, it has been proved, that an establishment collects strength, in proportion as the toleration is enlarged. §

BUT admitting, that the removal of a test law has a remote tendency to weaken an establishment, and suppose an establishment altogether removed; still I think, all our fears for religion are ill founded. When was Christianity taught with the greatest zeal, and received in the greatest simplicity? Before the establishment of it by Constantine the great I am also forced to admit, that religion rests on a stronger basis, where it is not established, than where it is. Survey the different parties without the church; they stand firm, though not established; they are even oppressed by the establishment, yet they stand firm. — Would they lose ground, if those oppressions were taken away by the removal of our establishment? Very far from it. As to those, who now compose the established church, if the legislature had not made provision for them, they would naturally sink into one or other of the sects, or form societies more agreeable to their own taste: and real religion, so far from losing any thing, would, I am persuaded, be a considerable gainer. Those, who felt no interest in religion, would do, as they do now. They would either, from considerations of decency, or worldly interest, frequent, on the first day, some place of worship, or else smoke their pipes, talk politics, visit their cousins, and take their pleasure, as they do now.

THE state of those Dissenters, who have academies more professedly appropriated to the study of sacred literature,

§ *Ibid.* Chap. VI.

rature, than either of our Universities, as well as "a class of men, set apart to the teaching of religion, and to the conducting of public worship, and for these purposes secluded from other employments,"* affords, I think, a sufficient reply to Mr. Paley's first question on establishments: for they differ as well from the Quakers, "who have no separate clergy," as from the established clergy, in not being "set apart by public authority." This system entirely sets aside Mr. Paley's remark, "that it would be found impossible to engage men of worth and ability in the sacred profession." For have not this order of men, even in the judgement of many of the most respectable of the established clergy, produced some of the ablest defences of Christianity? And shall we entertain that opinion of many learned men within the church, as to suppose, they would have been less industrious in their researches, or less communicative of their labours, if they had not been excited "by those allurements, which invite men of talents to enter the church?"†

I ACKNOWLEDGE, indeed, that those who engage in the ministerial profession, when supported by voluntary contributions, may be exposed to difficulties, and even temptations; I acknowledge, "that a polemical and proselyting spirit, mixed with views of private gain, may sometimes generate strifes and indecent jealousies."‡ Yet trifling are these evils, when compared with the alarming consequences of the opposite system. In the one case,

* Paley. Vol. II. 306, &c.

† Ibid. p. 323.

‡ Ibid. p. 319.

case, it is the popular preacher, sowing a few errors, and misleading a handful of people: in the other, it is the aspiring prelate, flattering the magistrate to perpetuate error, and debasing the policy of NATIONS.

BUT the abuses of individuals afford no plea against institutions, just in their principles, and benevolent in their tendencies. — Let the two systems be examined by this criterion, and I shall not be long in determining where the truth lies; let them also be considered on another ground, and the advantage still is evidently in favour of the less exalted party. The tender attachments, and strong friendships, which exist between pastor and flock, united together by mutual obligations, afford a strong presumption, that the system which leaves the maintenance of ministers to the free and voluntary exertions of the people, is preferable “to a legal provision, compulsory on those who contribute to it.”† To say the least of one system, it is evidently founded in justice. Whereas the other, that leaves the pastor independant of the flock, has contrary tendencies. The affection and respect, which ought to be equally divided among a society of friends, (and such men uniting in social worship ought ever to be) retires to the hall of a great patron. As to the flock, the pastor, feels his independance, affects a superiority, mutual attachment is not known, and a compulsory provision is paid with reluctance, and received with suspicion.

THE nature of christianity, and the prophecies of the holy scriptures, are the true grounds, on which to attack establishments.

† Paley, Vol. II, p. 314.

establishments. If christianity had been left to its own inherent force, the difficulties, arising from the extent of parishes, and the maintenance of ministers, would, ere now, not have existed.* But I must not enter on this question here.

THE doctrine of "general expedience," the basis of Mr. Paley's philosophy, has been lately examined by a judicious writer:† the evil tendency of the principle he has, I think, fully shewn; and with a candour, liberality, and good sense, for which, I am persuaded, he will receive the thanks of Mr. Paley. So far as relates to establishments, the tendency of this principle is most pernicious. Under its shelter, the tyrant and politician deluge the world in blood, and the philosopher converts articles of faith into articles of peace!

I CONCLUDE with a reflection of an excellent writer. "And if this be our opinion concerning establishments, that they are not strictly vindicable on principles of liberty, we shall easily perceive, that an establishment without a toleration is detestable; and that in an establishment with a toleration, it is the toleration which is the most sacred part of the constitution: that, being the assertion of religious liberty, which is a natural right; whereas an establishment is always, more or less, an invasion or infringement of it: and should any of those, who acquiesce in religious establishments, happen to embrace such sentiments concerning them, I can see no worse

* See Paley.

† The Principles of Moral Philosophy investigated, and briefly applied to the Constitution of Civil Society, by Mr. Gisborne.

worse consequence likely to arise, than that they would be more zealous for reducing them to as near a conformity as possible with christian liberty, and christian simplicity; whereas high notions of the authority of ecclesiastical governors, or of the civil magistrate in matters of religion, are apt to teach that "patient resignation of private conduct to public judgement," which though "many ingenious authors" seem to think it very commendable, I am glad, it is not my task to defend." †

† Furneaux's Letters to Judge Blackstone. p. 49. Notes. I cannot suffer myself to pass unnoticed here the disingenuous conduct of Bishop Warburton, who, in giving us the sentiments, as he would have us believe, of King William, both before, and after he came to the crown, says, "his conduct was uniformly the same. He gave them, that is, the Protestant Dissenters, a TOLERATION, but would not consent to abolish the test." The only fault I find with this account, says Dr. Furneaux, is, that it is not history, but fable. He has, accordingly, given a fair statement of this matter from historians of credit, from the speech of his Majesty, and from the Journals of the two Houses. Furneaux's Letters. p. 178. Notes.

N.B. To illustrate p. 250. I add this Article of the New Constitution in America, "The Senators and Representatives, and the members of the several state legislatures, and all executive and judicial officers, both of the united states, and of the several states, shall be bound by oath, or affirmation, to support this New Constitution, but no religious test shall ever be required, as a qualification to any office, or public trust, under the united states." Article VI. Nine of the states acceded to the New Constitution, in 1787. In 1786 the state of Virginia passed an "act for religious freedom," by which the maintenance of ministers is left at the option of the people. The Policy of these states, and the prosperity of religion in Virginia, confirm my remarks on these subjects, and afford an additional answer to many things advanced by Bishop Warburton, and Mr. Paley.

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PART IV.

CHAP. I.

*How far Subscription is consistent with the
Doctrines and Precepts of Christianity.*

WHETHER then we consider Subscription, as Men, as Philosophers, or as Britons, I think it incumbered with difficulties, nor are those difficulties so inconsiderable as some would have us believe. The interest of civil society, the improvement of the human understanding, and the honour of the British government are all affected by it. I proceed to inquire, How far it is consistent with the Doctrines and Precepts of Christianity?

To affirm what is truth, and what is error, where different conclusions are drawn from the same Revelation, is an affair of delicacy; consistent Protestants will

not place themselves in the infallible chair. One side of a question, however, can only be true. As a Protestant, therefore, I inquire, on what side that truth lies? and as a Protestant, that has no interest in concealing his sentiments, I shall deliver what, after all, is but "private judgement." But should any body say, Sir, you are a heretic; I reply, Sir, your church is not infallible. Should any one say, Sir, you are a deceiver; I reply, Sir, I never unlocked my heart to you: but I who keep the key, know I am sincere. Thou wise and good Being, who hast visited the nations with the most gracious discoveries, may we attend to the voice of thy Son! May a sacred regard to truth, and the purest considerations of benevolence, possess every christian inquirer!

THAT the doctrines of christianity have been misrepresented, is no very modern opinion. It has been the judgement, of some of the most learned, pious, and disinterested men both of the church of England and of the Dissenters. Does any body ask, How can these things be? What follows will throw some light on the question. Before the invention of printing, the numerous transcribers of the scriptures would, sometimes, necessarily make mistakes: the manuscripts, also, from whence the first printed copies were taken, were neither the most ancient, nor the most correct: and our version was taken from a copy liable to all these objections.† Since our version was made, more ancient manuscripts, and
more

† Magna aliquando libertate hi Editores (Complutenses) usi sunt. Lamberti Bos Prolegomena ad LXX. Cap. II.

more nearly approaching the autograph of the Prophets and Apostles, than the preceding, have come to light, which prove, that many errors had crept into the most ancient copies.† Moreover, in our version many things appear emphatical, which in the originals have no emphasis: many absurd doctrines have received their origin from idioms of language, and been erected on eastern metaphors. It must be added, that the ill-judged policy of the early christians, the ignorance of the monkish ages, the pious frauds of interested ecclesiastics, the imperfect reformation, that was made from very gross corruptions, the tendency, which the bulk of mankind are wont to have to the marvellous and incomprehensible have laid the foundation of popular errors. So that the most learned investigators of sacred theology bear a joint testimony, that a NEW TRANSLATION of the holy scriptures is, what many important discoveries, and our great improvements in literature, most loudly call for.*

† Kennicot's Introduction to the State of the printed Hebrew Text of the Old Testament considered. Vol, II.

* Kennicot, Lowth, Symonds, Wakefield, &c.

C H A P. II.

On the Trinity.

THE first Article relates to the Trinity; a term not found in the scriptures. Suspicions, therefore, have arisen in the minds of some thinking men in regard to the doctrine: suspicions, which have increased by every attempt of the contrary party to remove them.

It is allowed by Eusebius, that the Ebionites, called also Nazarenes, from Jesus of Nazareth, that is, the first Jewish converts to christianity, thought that Christ was only a man. † This also was the opinion of those called Alogi by Epiphanius, § that is, the first gentile converts. There is reason also to believe that this was likewise the opinion of those religious persons and philosophers (ασκητοι) that resided in Egypt, of whom Philo makes mention, not merely as having seen them, but as highly approving them: nor does he say any thing from whence can be inferred, they held different notions of God

† Λίτον μὲν γὰρ αὐτὸν καὶ ἤγουντο, κατὰ προκοπὴν ἡθὺς αὐτοῦ μόνον ἀνθρώπου δεδικαιωμένον, ἐξ ἀνδρὸς τε κοινωνίας, καὶ τῆς Μαρίας γεγεννημένον. Eusebius. Lib. III, Cap. 27.

§ Called so improperly by Epiphanius, as Dr. Priestley, after Dr. Lardner, observes. Hist. of the Corruptions of Christianity. Vol. I. p. 14.

God from himself.* These early christians, worshipping one God, without the complex idea of a Trinity, an enquirer might naturally suspect, even if no gospel were left, that this was the doctrine of Christ and his apostles. It is not pretended that the term Trinity occurs till the time of Justin Martyr: the book is evidently spurious, it being contradicted by the general tenour of his writings, ‡ nor is it mentioned by Eusebius and Jerome, though both reckon up the books written by Justin.† As I shall, hereafter, state the opinions of a few of the more early fathers on Christ and the Holy Spirit, and shew how they came to be deified, I shall only observe here, that the proper orthodox doctrine, contained in this article of the co-equality and co-eternity of three divine persons, was not settled till after the council of Nice, in the middle of the third century. The truth of which remark is acknowledged by the most zealous advocates for the Trinity, who have been conversant with the writings of the fathers of the three first centuries. §

AND when the doctrine began to spread, there were always men, on whom it could not sit easy. Notwithstanding the decisions of four general councils, the Trinity was

* ΠΕΡΙ ΒΙΟΥ ΘΕΩΡΗΤΙΚΗ. Opera. p. 691. Edit. Turnebi. Philo's opinion, concerning God, I shall remark presently. On what grounds I call these Ascetics Christians. Vid. Euseb. Lib. III. Cap. XVII. p. 68. 69. Edit. Reading.

‡ ΕΚΘΕΣΙΣ ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ ΠΕΡΙ ΤΗΣ ΑΓΙΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΟΜΟΟΥΣΙΑΣ ΤΡΙΑΔΟΣ, compared with his Dialogue with Trypho.

† Mr. Biddle.

§ See their Confessions at Large in Mr. Whiston's Letter to the Earl of Nottingham.

was the knotty place where heretics stood aghast! Two more councils were found necessary to establish it; but being enforced by human authority, it became sufficient to let christian people know, it was a mystery!

WITHOUT entering into the controversy about numerical, and individual unity, and separate, and distinct personality, *ομοουσιος*, and *ομοιουσιος*, which divided the first christians, I have sometimes paused; and dropping the subtle distinctions of schoolmen, and the metaphysical refinements of divines, have called in the assistance of common sense. Common sense made nothing more of one person, than one thinking intelligent agent, Paul; nor of three persons, than three such intelligent persons, Paul, James, and Peter. Common sense, being silent respecting such an extraordinary union, as makes three persons one being, except a union of design, of sentiment, or affection, I have been unwilling to put it to the rack, and retired, only asking, the question, How can these things be?

WHERE common sense is silent, theology is frequently loquacious. Theology says, that we know not the essence of any thing, least of all, of God; and that the aforesaid reasoning, though inapplicable to men, may, for aught we know, apply to God. Indeed, ancient fathers, and modern divines say, that the notion may be collected from nature. The sun, the ocean, and trees have preached the doctrine of a Trinity in unity. In sculpture, painting, and music, wonderful harmonies have been found to illustrate a Trinity in unity.

THEO-

THEOLOGY says, that she finds something analogous to this doctrine in the history of mankind. The divine Plato speaks of a Bonum, a Boni filius, and an anima mundi, as did many of his disciples, going even beyond their master. Among the poets we have Cælum, Saturn, and Jupiter. The Magi among the Persians, had their Oromasis, their Mittis, and their Arimanis, i. e. God, Mind, and Spirit: all analogous to three divine persons, subsisting in one essence, a Trinity in unity. †

It were surely an endless labour to search for a Trinity in unity, in the pagan mythology. A learned writer has endeavoured to shew that the most ancient idolaters, worshipped one God, the sun, the God of fire, known among them by different names.* As to Plato, what an air of mystery is conspicuous in his writings is well known. If he collected any new idea, it was natural for him to refine it down to his own notions. This, however, will not satisfy theology. We are told, that the Jews having been in captivity in Egypt, left behind them the doctrine of a Trinity. That the Jews, treasuring it up among their mysteries, delivered it out only on extraordinary occasions: that, however, at length, it stole out from among them, and enlightened the Persians, Grecians, in short, the whole eastern world. Plato, travelling into Egypt, and being initiated into their mysteries, brought this rara avis into Greece, and blessed his countrymen with it. Theology triumphs in the discovery,

† Vid. Alsted. Encyclop. Pars Pneumatic. I. Cap. 5. R. 9.

* Bryant's Mythology, Vol. I.

very, and says, common sense has nothing to do in the inquiry. It is a notion to be collected from revelation. — It being first revealed to the Jews, who afterwards enlightened the Gentiles. Before a doctrine, so far above the common sense of mankind, be believed on the authority of revelation, an inquirer should ask, Whether, indeed, it be a doctrine of revelation at all?

THE Hebrew names for God, are all expressive of the highest reverence of him, or of some perfection of his character.† Some suppose, that they express a Trinity in unity. But of these two modes of derivation, it is to be observed, that the first naturally flows from roots, agreeably to the Hebrew idiom; the last from letters, which depend on fancy. The former are allowed by Jews, who had no interest in the inquiry; the latter made by christians, who had an interest to serve.

Is it not extraordinary, that if a Trinity in unity were to be found in the Jewish scriptures, that Josephus in his history of the Jews, and particularly in the Mosaic account of the creation, should say nothing about it? Yet he certainly does not. Philo Judæus also preserves the same profound silence. The septuagint version of the Old Testament, made by Jews, have no term, expressive of a Trinity in unity. Is it not strange, that these

† Every thing that can be advanced in favour of a Trinity in unity, from Elohim, see fully answered in Mr. Coultinurst's *Blunders Exposed*. No. 4. By Mr. Friend: a book with a rough title, but solid contents; and Mr. Wakefield's *Enquiry into the Opinions of the Early Christian Writers*. Introduction. p. 7.

these eminent Jews should not understand their own scriptures? §

“God said, let us make man” — is the language of Majesty, deliberating on the creation of man, the last and noblest of the productions of creative wisdom.* “The man is become as one of us, knowing good and evil,” was supposed by Philo, Maimonides, and the Jews in general, to be spoken to the angels. † The learned and excellent Abauzit translates Mimennu, which we turn “of us,” from it, and then the passage will read, Behold! The

§ Josephus's term is, ο Θεός, or Θεός. Remarkable are these words of Josephus. Παρ' ἡμῖν γὰρ ὅτε περὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ λόγος ἀκούσεται τὶς ἀλλήλοις κατεναντίως — Εἰς δὲ λόγος οὐκ συμφωνῶν περὶ Θεοῦ — Εἰς ναὶ ἐν δὲ. Contra Appion. Lib. II. Philo's words are no less remarkable; recapitulating the substance of his book περὶ Μωϋσ. Κόσμοποι. he closes thus, ὅτι τε ἐστὶ, καὶ ὑπάρχει Θεός, καὶ ὅτι Εἰς ὁ ὢν ΟΝΤΩΣ ἐστὶ, καὶ ὅτε πεποίηκε τὸν κόσμον, καὶ πεποίηκεν ἑνα ἑνα, ὡς ἐλεγχθῆ, κατὰ τὴν ΜΟΝΩΣΙΝ ἐξομοιωσας ἑαυτῷ. Philo supposed when God said, “Let us make man,” &c. he took council with himself (τὶς γὰρ ἦν ἑτερος; he adds.) When the Fathers put their sense on it, they opposed the common sentiments of the Jews.

* Several of the early christian writers, Barnabas, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Eusebius and others, have quoted this passage as if addressed to Christ; but Clement, whose authority weighs down all theirs in his Epist. to the Corin. refers it to the Supreme Being. Οὕτω γὰρ φησὶν ὁ Θεός· Ποιησωμεν ἄνθρωπον κατ' εἰκόνα, καὶ καθ' ὁμοίωσιν ἡμετέραν. Καὶ ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεός τὸν ἄνθρωπον. Epist. ad Romanos. 34.

† Mr. Wakefield remarks, that the Targum of Jonathan Ben Uziel paraphrases the former of these passages thus, “And Jehovah said to the angels, who minister before him,” and Gen. xi. 7. thus, “Come, said Jehovah to the angels, who stand before him:” and Gen. iii. 22, is paraphrased thus, “And the Lord God said, to the angels, who were ministering before him, Behold! Adam,” &c. Wakefield's Inquiry, &c. Introduction. p. 9. 10.

The man is by it (that is the tree of knowledge) become as one of those who know good and evil, that is, to know good and evil. The word evidently admits this interpretation, and occurs five times in this chapter, where it is translated of it, and in the 11th. and 17th. verses it clearly refers to the tree of knowledge. The passage thus translated will stand in beautiful contrast to what follows, "the man by eating the tree of knowledge is come to know good from evil; but now he must be prevented from putting forth his hand, lest he also take of the tree of life, and eat of it, and live for ever." || The Chaldee Paraphrase, more ancient than the New Testament, so interprets Mimennu.†

I THEREFORE, incline to think with some learned Trinitarians, that if we take the Old Testament without the New, it will not be easy to prove this article from it. § What light then does the New Testament throw upon a Trinity in unity?

THE Jews, who conversed with our Lord, seem unacquainted with it. Can any thing be more express, on the unity of God, than what our Lord says, when quoting the Old Testament? "Hear, O Israel, Jehova, our God is one Jehova." If a Jew found no Trinity there, Is it probable our Lord did? He gives no intimation, that he understands it in a different sense. Had there been any such distinction, as the Trinitarians contend for in Eloheim or Jehova, Is it not probable, that our Lord would have made it? The question is put in a solemn manner
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|| Abauzit's Miscellanies. p. 113.

† Gen. i, 26. — iii, 22. § Burnet on the 39 Art.

by a Jew appealing to the Jewish scriptures, the terms of which he knew, but wants to hear Christ's interpretation. Our Lord, himself a Jew, answers with no less solemnity. "Thou shalt love Jehova, thy God," intimating, that the command was so plain and popular, as to need no explanation. † He could make it no plainer.

ON no subject whatever is our Lord more explicit, than on the unity of God. Nor can I find one passage in the four gospels, which gives countenance to the doctrine of a Trinity. A famous Trinitarian § has said, that the baptismal form has been the means of preserving the Trinity. But a few remarks, which I shall make on the person of Christ, and Spirit, will render this doubtful. Indeed, the doctrine of the proper unity of God is so natural, that the heathens, amid gross idolatries, were frequently forced into it. †

It has been ingenuous in many expositors (though called Trinitarians) to lay little or no stress on the three witnesses; ¶ There are three, that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one. ‡ It has, indeed, all the appearance of an interpolation. It evidently destroys the connection; and is now sufficiently known to have had no place in the scriptures till the time of Jerome. It is in no manuscript, except in one, that nobody has seen! * The former part of the first

† Mar. xii. 29, 30. § Dr. Waterland.

‡ The Platonics (notwithstanding their mysticism) called God the *μονας*, the unity. Euripides and Sophocles have many excellent remarks on the unity.

¶ Dr. Doddridge in loco. ‡ 1 John, v. 7.

* Sir Isaac Newton's Letter on this Subject.

first article, therefore, There is one living and true God, is agreeable to the Gospel, that in the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, is certainly foreign to it.

C H A P. III.

Article II. Of the Word, or Son of God, that was made very Man.

"**T**HE Son, which is the word of God, the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed virgin, of her substance; so that two whole, and perfect natures, that is, the Godhead and the manhood were joined together in one person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God, and very man, who truly suffered, was dead, and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice not only for original guilt, but also for the actual sins of mankind." Is it not enough to create suspicions in the most credulous breast, to hear, that it was the current opinion for 300 years, that the Father alone was without a beginning! The present article contains what
we

we now call Athanasian doctrine, which maintains, that Christ was co-equal, and co-eternal with the Father. Waving all nice distinctions, I ask three plain questions.

I. ARE not God and Christ described in the Gospel, as two persons? By person, I mean what people do in common conversation, a thinking conscious being. I then proceed to ask, What constitutes me now, while in a room at Cambridge, the same person I was, when in London? A consciousness of my own existence; a consciousness of certain thoughts, and actions, which I at that time pursued. In this way then I ask, Whether God and Christ are not two persons? Now, consciousness being evidence of existence only to ourselves, by ourselves only could this question be answered. But Christ never telling me that he is the same Being as God, Why should I conclude, he is?

OUR Lord's assertion, "Before Abraham was, I am," has been, sometimes, produced in proof, that Christ is God. Yet the expression occurs frequently in the New Testament, where it cannot have that sense. And by examining the context it appears, that as Christ is speaking of the doctrine, which he taught, Abraham, and the prophets are set in opposition to him. Our Lord's meaning, therefore is, before Abraham existed, the Messiah was promised, and his œconomy foretold.†

THE expression, *Εγώ ειμι*, I am, is an elliptical expression, for I am he, that is, the Messiah, or the Son of God. See John, c. iv. 25. The woman saith to him, "We know that the Messias will come, who is called the

† John, viii. 58.

the Christ," &c. Jesus saith to her, "I who speak to thee, am he," *Εγώ εἰμι οὐρανόθεν*. So again c. viii. 24. "If ye believe not, that I am (*εγώ εἰμι*), where our translators turn it as it ought to have been translated here, "I am he." See also Chap. ix. 9. But he (the blind man), said, I am he, *εγώ εἰμι*, exactly the same form of expression, and many similar expressions will occur to an attentive reader of this Gospel. The "I am," then has no reference whatever to Exod. iii. 14. And here I cannot deny myself the pleasure of transcribing the following judicious remark of the very learned and indefatigable Mr. Wakefield. No text of scripture was ever more perverted by a wrong translation, than this in Exodus. The original Hebrew stands thus, I will be, who I will be;* or perhaps, more properly, I will be what I am, a form of words expressive of the eternal existence, and unalterable nature of Jehova. The LXX do not represent the phrase aright by, "I am" the existing or he who exists,† that is, I am — Jehovah, the living God. And afterwards they have not — I am § — but the existing || hath sent me. — To make, therefore, the I am of the Evangelist, a reference to this passage of the Pentateuch, is a most idle fancy, unsupported by the original, and; what is more to the purpose, by the Septuagint."‡ I AM, then, is, by no means a name even of Jehova.

SIMILAR conclusions have been drawn from our Lord's assertion, I and the Father are one.† But does not our
Lord

* אֲהִיָּה אֲשֶׁר אֲהִיָּה. † *Εγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν*. § *Εγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν*. ‡ An Enquiry into the Opinions of the three first Centuries concerning Christ.

† John, x. 30. compared with John, xvii, 11, &c.

Lord explain these words himself? that they may be one, even as we are one. The apostles were not of the same substance with Christ. Indeed the word explains itself: for it is not one being (*εις*), but (*εν*)* one thing, that is of one judgement, a form of expression, common to most languages. And thus the ancient fathers understood it.

As consciousness is proof only to a person's self of identity, other proofs give evidence to different people, such as sameness of name, of property, of figure, &c. Jesus Christ appeals to God by name; but never calls himself by the same name. He prays to God; but does he ever pray to himself? It is the property of God to be invisible: no man hath seen God at any time. But Christ was a visible being — was seen at Bethlehem — at Nazareth, at Galilee. God is an uncreated being; but Christ was born at Bethlehem. What says common sense?

NOTHING

* The following expressions will explain our Lord's meaning. That they may all speak the same thing: *a* that there be no divisions among them; that they be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and the same judgement. Elsewhere, we read of their being of one spirit, and one mind. *b* Christians are said to be, one body, one spirit, one body in Christ. *c* Two are one, says Pseudo Clement, When one speaks truth to the other, and when in two bodies, there is without dissembling one soul. 2d. Epist. ad Corinth. — He that planteth, and he that watereth, are one (*εν*) an expression, exactly parallel to the above. *d* I quote the second Epistle ascribed by some to Clement, merely by way of illustration, not as authority. It is clearly spurious. Eusebius, in his first book, speaks only of one Epistle of Clement, and though he speaks elsewhere, from report, of another, he does not speak of it, as having seen it.

a 1 Cor. i. 10. *b* Phil. i. 27. *c* Rom. xii. 5.

d 1 Cor. i. 12.

NOTHING proves this point to me more clearly, than the passages brought to prove the contrary. Christ is called the image of the invisible God, the express image of his person.† I say, therefore, he is not the same person. God made man in his image, after his likeness, therefore Adam could not be the same person as God. Christians are said to be conformed to the image of Christ,|| to bear the image of the earthly and heavenly. Being in the form, therefore, means, being in the resemblance, of; and this is its meaning in Philo Judæus, and Clemens Romanus. Being in the form of God, cannot mean being really God, except being in the form of a servant means being a real servant, which Christ was not, though by his condescension he appeared under that character,† making himself the servant of all. That Christ, therefore, in the sense of our article is one substance with the Father, or that the Godhead and manhood are one person, I cannot admit.*

2. OF these two different beings, is not one superior to the other? My Father says Christ is greater than I. And

† 1 Col. xv, Heb. i. 3. || Rom. viii. 29. 1 Cor. xv, 48.

* Solent Græci distinguere το κατ' ἐμφασιν, και το κατ' υποστασιν, ut scriptor de mundo. Sic Philo in ejusdem tituli libro, αυγη δε καθ' εαυτην υποστασιν εκ χει, non quod nullam habeat υπαρχιν, sed quod principalitas et origo ejus sit in sole. Sic in annulo figura est καθ' υποστασιν in cera κατ' ἐμφασιν. Ita potentia, justitia, veritas, in Deo, Christi patre sunt primario; in Christo vero secundario, sed ita, ut nobis in Christo ea evidenter appareant. Grotius in loco. Clemens Romanus speaks of man; της αυτης (nempe Θεου) εικονος χαρακτηρα. Clement. Epist. I. ad Corinth. 33. Philo, and others frequently use the same expression; but did either of them believe man to be one substance with God? † Hermas L, III, Simil. V. § 6.

And whatever Son means common sense says, that the Father is greater than the Son. And, indeed, Does it not appear, that Jehovah is greater than Christ, by a priority of existence? || By a superiority of wisdom? § By an essential and independent goodness? ‡ By a power unlimited in its exertions,† and endless in its duration? * Whereas, Christ received every thing from his Father; || and though as head of the new creation† he has a name above every name, and all principalities and powers, in the revolution of years, must submit to his dominion, yet the time is coming, when having brought the nations to subjection, agreeable to the end of his exaltation, he must lay down the kingdom, and become subject to his Father, and GOD be ALL in ALL. ‡

WHATEVER high opinions the ancient Fathers entertained of Christ, and whatever sense they might put on the λογος, the word of God, it should be noted, that they bear a uniform testimony, from the earliest of them to the time of Eusebius, (and few speak of it more highly than Eusebius himself)* that God, the Father alone, was uncreated: the most orthodox held the word to be the first begotten of God. At the council of Nice he was only called Θεου εκ Θεου, God of God, not αυτοθεου, very God, as the

|| Mat. ii. § Mat. xxiv. 36. ‡ 19. 17. † 26. * 1 Cor. xv. 24. || John xiv. 10. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 28.

† See two Discourses on the Creation of all Things, by Jesus Christ, and the Resurrection of the Dead, by the Man Christ Jesus. By Mr. Tyrwhitt of Jesus College.

In what sense Christ is Emmanuel, Matth. i. 23. ✠
גִּבּוֹר, Isai. ix. 6. or the Mighty God, See Mr. Coulthurst's Blunders exposed. No. 3, 4.

* — η πρωτογονος, και πρωτοτοκος τῷ Θεῷ, και αὐτὸς ἐκ προων λογος. Euseb. Hist. Lib. I. c. 2.

the term Son, is expressive of inferiority, so also it should be further observed, that "in the Jewish style, and the language of scripture, all good men, and all people, who are in a covenant relation to God, are his sons, and intitled to many blessings and privileges: but Jesus as the Messiah is the Son of God, by way of distinction." Vid. Exod. iv. 22, 23. Jer. xxxi. 9. Hos. ii. 1, 2. Cor. vi. 18. John i. 12. and Matth. xxv. 54. Rom. i. 3. 4.† the Son of God, is the same as Messiah, and therefore expresses the office, which he bears, rather than his nature. He who sends a messenger is supposed to be greater, than the person sent.

3. Upon further inquiry, it appears, that the scriptures not only lay an emphasis on the relation, which Christ bears to God, but on the relation, which he bears to men. As he came to save men, it is express on his being a man. As the children partook of flesh, and blood, that is, were men, not Angels, Christ also took part of the same, that is, was a man, Heb. ii. 14. not an angel, or a man in appearance, as the Gnosticks supposed. He was prophesied of emphatically, as the seed of the woman, Gen. 3. 15. as the root of Jesse, Is. xi. 10. As a man of sorrows, Is. liii. 3. Under that character he lived, and died: he also rose from the dead, being now exalted to a rank, which he held not before, Acts, ii. 33. — v. 31. The difference, which I find from the scripture, between Christ, and the rest of mankind, is only this, that he had a greater measure of the spirit of God, Matt. iii. 16. xii. 18. a more extensive commission than any preceding prophet, Heb. i. 2. Cor. v. 21. Heb.

† Lardner on the Logos.

Heb. iv. 15. and a more interesting relation to his fellow creatures, Heb. ii.

THIS important doctrine rests not on a few solitary texts, but is connected with the whole system of revelation. The spirit of prophecy bears so uniform a testimony to it, Rev. xix. 10. that all the ancient Jews expected their Messiah to be a mere man, and do to this day.* It is the hinge on which all the great facts and leading principles of the gospel turn; and if ill-translated texts were rectified, interpolations removed, and the style of scripture better understood, it would appear, I believe, the truth, as it is in Jesus.

THE latter part of this article seems true; but only on supposition, that the former part is false. For if "the Son, begotten of everlasting of the Father, be the very and eternal God; if very God, and very man be one Christ, never to be divided," || it will follow, that Christ could not "suffer, and die," &c. If it be said, that the human nature only suffered, one half of Christ only suffered: and if one half only suffered, what becomes of the sacrifice, which, it seems, receives all its importance from the Godhead? Will it be said, that the divine nature suffered, (which, if very God, and very man, be one Christ,

* Το γὰρ λέγειν σε πρῶταρχεῖν Θεὸν ὄντα πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων τετὸν τὸν Χριστὸν, εἰτα γενῆ θῆναι ἀνθρώπον γενομένον ὑπομείναι, καὶ ὅτι ἔχ' ἀνθρώπου ἐξ ἀνθρώπου, ὃ μόνον παραδοξὸν δοκεῖ μοι εἶναι, ἀλλὰ καὶ μῶρον. Justin Martyr. Dial. cum. Tryphon. Jud. Edit. Lut. p. 266. On this ground the Jew often puzzles the Christian Philosopher, with whom zeal supplies the place of argument: though he only supposed Christ to be God in a subordinate sense.

|| Article II.

Christ, never to be divided, and Christ died, must be the case;) What, then, shall we say to such expressions, as these, very God died, and was buried, was made a sacrifice? &c.

O! curas hominum, O! quantum est in rebus inane.

How beautiful and well connected is the christian truth! There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all. 1. Tim. ii. 5.

IN justice to this article, I just observe that a figure of speech helps over difficulties, otherwise insuperable. Theology first frames a figure of speech, by which two distinct natures make one God; and afterwards another, which applies to the human nature, what belongs to the divine, and to the divine, what belongs to the human.*

THIS article appears to me to contain the grand error, which has had an evil influence on the whole system of christianity. But "seeing it has been adopted by such great numbers of mankind, it is to be considered, as any other fact in history?" Dr. Priestley has, therefore, traced its origin and its growth in his History, of the Corruptions of Christianity. †

I WILL add a word or two more. Admitting that Christ is called God, in the New Testament, it can only refer

* Atque istam quidem duplicis naturæ conjunctionem, quæ in Christo subest, tanta religione exprimunt, ut eas quandoque inter se communicent. Qui tropus *ιδιωμάτων κοινωνία* dictus est. Calvini Institut. L. II. Cap. 14. Sect. 1, † Vol. I.

refer to the important character, sustained by him, as the Creator of a new dispensation. Indeed, every body knows, that Eloheim (God) in the Old Testament is applied promiscuously to Jehova, to angels, to idols, and to men; and that Deus among the Romans, and Θεός among the Greeks, had the same signification: thus Virgil, Deus nobis hæc otia fecit—erit ille mihi semper Deus; and Pythagoras, Ἀθανάτου Θεοῦ εἶσση. || The distinction between the Creator of the world, the Supreme Governor, and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Master, is observable in the use of the two words, Δεσποτης, and Κυρίος: the former is always applied to Jehova, but never to Christ: * the latter is applied to both; and this distinction is made by the most early christian writers. Δημιουργός and Δεσποτης they apply to the Supreme Being only; Κυρίος to Christ, as may be seen at large in Clemens Romanus, and others. Further, Christ is no where in the New Testament, said to have made the material world (κοσμον) but only the ages, the different times, or dispensations of religion (αιωνας,) with an immediate view to whom they were all constituted. Heb. i. The last clause of the second verse ought to be translated, Through whom also he constituted the ages.

FEED

|| See also Joh. x. 34. Acts xii. 22. xxviii. 6.

* This word occurs but seldom, in the New Testament, and is always applied to the Supreme Being. Mat. xi. 25. Acts iv. 24. Jud. iv.

The Complutensian Editors by leaving out the second και (one proof, among many others, of their inaccuracy) applied Δεσποτης to Christ, Simili pia fraude locum Judæ 4. ita ediderunt τον μονον Θεον και Δεσποτην, τον Κυριον ημων Ιησουν Χριστον. Westenii Prolegomena ad Novum Testamentum. Vol. I. p. 119.

FEED the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood, Acts xx. 28. is an imposition on the common sense of mankind. The most ancient version, (the Syriac) and a most correct translation, (the Coptic,) turn it, the church of the Messiah, and the church of the Lord. §

CHRIST is called the Father of the age,† emphatically so styled, by reason of the perpetuity of the gospel age, which was to be commensurate with time,

The promised Father, of a future age. **POPE**

(improperly in our translation, the everlasting Father.) Agreeably to this notion of Christ, it is said, He shall see his seed — Is. iii. 10. Christians are said to be **BEGOTTEN** again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 1 Pet. xiii. they are called the **CHILDREN** of Christ: Behold me, and the **CHILDREN**, whom thou hast given me, Heb. i. 13. In a similar sense it is said of Abraham; I will make thee a Father of many nations, and so shall thy seed be, Gen. xv. 5. Hence, he is called the Father of us all, of all the **SEED**, not only of that which is of the law, but of that, which is of the faith of Abraham. Rom. iii. 16, &c. See also 1 Cor. iv. 15.

CALLING

§ Wakefield.

† אבִי עָלָם. Es. ix. 6. How the different versions translate this passage may be seen in Mr. Friend's valuable little performance, entitled, Mr. Coulthurst's Blunders Exposed. Eusebius turns it, Πατηρ του μελλοντος αιωνος. Αιων, and eternitas have this sense in the early christian writers. Tertullian, speaking of those who denied the perpetuity of Baptism, on account of its simplicity, adds, eo incredibilior existimetur ejus æternitas. De Baptismo,

CALLING upon the name of the Lord, † is frequently applied to Christ, but these expressions may be translated called after the name of the Lord; or making a public profession of his name. Yet admitting, they relate to prayer to Jesus Christ, the Trinitarian and Arian Hypothesis gain but little: many who believe Christ was only a man, admit that prayer was addressed to Christ, in the first ages, during the continuance of miraculous powers and many of the Polish Unitarians maintained that prayer ought still to be addressed to him, and were zealous for it even to a degree of bigotry and rigour. Socinus wrote a treatise on the subject, and in the Racovian catechism those who do not invoke Christ, are said to be no christians.*

MY

† 1 Cor. i. 2. *Συν πασι τοις επικαλυμένοις το ονομα του Κυριου ημων Ιησου.* — Similar expressions occur frequently in the Old Testament, where the LXX turn them, called after, or by &c. Chron. vii. 14. My people, which are called by my name, *Ους επικεκληται το ονομα μου επ' αυτους* LXX — *Ους το ονομα μου επικεκληται*, Alex. so Is. xliii. 7. *אֲנִי קָרָא בְשֵׁם יְהוָה*. Παντες οσοι επικεκληνται τω ονοματι μου. — LXX. Gen. iv. 26. And he called his name Enosh: then began people to call on the name of the Lord, *לִקְרָא בְשֵׁם יְהוָה*. *Επικαλειςθαι το ονομα του Κυριου* LXX. Aquila, *Τοτε ηρχθη του καλειςθαι εν ονοματι του Κυριου* — Then began people to be called, in, after, or by, the name of the Lord. Thus Hermas, two or three times, *nomen quod super eos erat invocatum*, L. iii. Simil. viii. § 6. which he elsewhere explains by *nomen Domini tulerunt*. § 10. *ferre nomen*, &c. *Ονομα*, has *κατα* frequently omitted both by Latin and Greek writers, and sometimes *ονομα* itself, *οτι καλεμεν*, και τειτο εκαλειτο Lucian in Gallo, p. 243. *Rogatus quid vocaretur* Livius, Lib. 38. Cap. 17. See Bos Ellipses. This expression thus understood will be equal to called by the name of the Lord, children of God, called saints, or christians, &c.

* Vid. Volsogenii Op. inter Frat. Pol. Compendium Rel. Christianæ, p. 4.

My limits do not allow me to enlarge on this subject. I must content myself with observing, that having seriously examined the scriptures with a view to this doctrine, I am fully persuaded, that it is clearly supported by the general tenour, and every genuine uncorrupted text of the sacred writings.

THE personifying the Λογος, the reason, the wisdom, or word of God, and its subsequent exaltation into the place of a God, first laid the foundation of christian idolatry. When Philosophers came into the church of Christ, being ashamed of a crucified man, they brought with them their Master Plato, who read lectures to them on, IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD, AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD, AND THE WORD WAS GOD.

C H A P. IV.

Article III. Of the Holy Ghost.

A TRINITARIAN writer of some repute among the Dissenters,† enumerates seven heresies against the holy Ghost. This article, against such heresies main-

† Hurrion's Sermons on the holy Spirit, V, I. p. 48.

maintains, that the holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and Son, is of one substance, majesty and glory with the Father, very and eternal God! Accordingly, the orthodox offer prayer to him, distinct from the Father, and in the Litany he is addressed, as God the holy Ghost. I cannot find that this doctrine was known in the earlier ages of the church.

WHOEVER Barnabas (called by some the Apostle) be, he was clearly a very ancient, though a very absurd writer. In his whimsical Epistle, the spirit is mentioned three or four times,† and it agrees with the doctrine of the scriptures. The next writer Hermas, or Hermes, was clearly a platonic, and agreeably to the confused notions of Plato, talks more of a spirit, but very indeterminately. § In two places, I think, he calls the holy Spirit, the Son, and when he speaks more determinately, he opposes the holy Spirit to evil Spirits, and a good genius to an evil one, meaning the same things by different terms. He calls the good Spirit, the Prophet of God, the evil Spirit a false Prophet. In Clemens Romanus's Epistle there is no such notion. The holy spirit stands with him for divine influence,‡ in the sense, which the apostles use it, and that he knew not our orthodox doctrine, appears from his doxologies at the end of his Epistle, where the Spirit is not mentioned. Justin Martyr was the person, who brought plentifully of Plato's philosophy into the church of Christ, and in him
we

† Barnabæ Epist. inter Frat. Apost. p. 21. — 61. — 95.
Edit. Russel.

§ Hermæ Pastor, L. III. Mandat. vi. ix, xi.

‡ Epist. 1 ad Cor. i. 2. — 42. 45.

we find more about the spirit, than any preceding writer.† I have not referred to Ignatius, either in the present, or the preceding question: for even his GENUINE Epistles carry such marks of gross interpolations, to serve a system, that it will be very suspicious to quote them as authority in this controversy. In Polycarp's Epistle to the Philippians the holy Spirit is not once mentioned.

MAIMONIDES, one of the most judicious of the Jewish Rabbins, reckons six acceptations of the word Ruach, or spirit, two of which are divine influence, and design, will, or purpose; and he adds, that whenever the word spirit occurs, spoken of God, it is always either in one or other of these senses.*

By consulting a few passages in the Old Testament, this will be found true. Genesis, i. 2. Exod. xxxv. 21. Num. xi. 26. 29. Judges iii. 10. Job xxvi. 13. Ps. civ. 30.

In the New Testament, also, it stands for divine influence, communicated in miraculous powers, and spiritual gifts, blessings, and privileges. Matth. x. 19. 20. Mar. xiii. 11. Luk. xii. 11. 12. Luk. xxi. 14. 15. John, iii. 34. Acts, xi.

THE force of the word spirit will appear by considering, that the word power is frequently synonymous with it. "The holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee." So in Exodus,

† Vid. Cohortatio ad Græcos. p. 30. 31. Edit. Lut.

* Lardner's first Postscript to his Letter on the Logos.

Exodus, xxxi. 3, 4, 5, 6. Job, xxvi. 13: and by considering such expressions as these, Spirit of his Son, Spirit of adoption, Spirit of holiness, and the like. Can these be applied to a person? This mode of speech, originally Hebrew, passed into the Greek language, and is now used in most languages; we say, that such a person is endued with a noble spirit; with the spirit of a man; do it with all your spirit. Let it be observed, that in the scriptures no mention is made of prayer to the Spirit. I do not ask then whether God and the holy Ghost are two beings, but whether there be such a being as the holy Ghost? If from such an expression, as "the spirit" we contend, that it is a person, and a divine person, we shall have more divine persons, than we are aware of. †

THE passage, which is supposed to give the clearest proof of the personality of the spirit, is John, xiv. 26. It is there called the comfortor (ὁ παρακλητὴς.) And it is added, that, he shall lead you into all truth. But this appears, evidently, a personification. The disciples were to be visited with a divine influence, to supply the presence of Christ, by giving them larger discoveries of divine truth, and supporting them under their trials to the end of life. Agreeably, therefore, to scripture style, it was natural to call it the comforter; a mode of personification common to all languages, and peculiarly conformable to the genius of the holy scriptures. I cannot possibly understand our Lord's temptation without personifying the principle of evil, (ὁ διαβολὴς.) Ye cannot serve God and mammon, is a similar personification.

THESE

† See a New Translation of Matthew's Gospel, by Mr. Wakefield, p. 8, 9.

“THESE are a deceiver and an antichrist (ο πλανη and ο Αντιχριστος.)” In the Epistle to the Romans civil government (not the civil governor,) is called the minister of God. It holdeth not the sword in vain, &c. All along civil magistracy is spoken of, and yet, the Εξουσια or power, is no person.

HERE then we have the divine influence, or power first personified, then advanced to the place of a God; and at length comes out that profound mystery, God the holy Ghost co-equal and co-eternal with God the Father!

C H A P. V.

Articles IV. VIII. Of the going down of Christ into Hell: — The three Creeds.

WHAT could Jesus do in that dismal place? The articles of 1552 tell us, “that while his body lay in the sepulchre till the resurrection, his ghost departed from him; that it was with the Ghosts, that were in prison, or in hell, and did preach to the same.” Now the term *αδης*, as it occurs in the septuagint, and New Testament, and Sheol in the Old, mean the grave, the place

place where good and bad men were removed at death, But the reformers, it is well known, put a very different sense on these words. Their opinion, together with the various commentators on the articles, are stated at large by Mr. Wilton (a very candid orthodox writer among the dissenters) in his Review of some of the Articles of the Church. However, luckily for subscribers, this article has many literal and grammatical senses.† Nevertheless, before the doctrine of the reformers be admitted, it should be proved, that there exists an immaterial substance, called the soul, which thinks, and moves independent of the body. Agreeably to a hint dropt in a former part of this work, I meant to have written an essay on the soul. But my limits will not allow me to enter on this subject. I, therefore, content myself with observing, that the Hebrew word *Nepheesh*, in the Old Testament, and the Greek, *ψυχη* in the New, mean the principle of life: “and the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life,” *Nismoth Hajjeim*, (Heb. living breaths,) and man became a living soul (Hebr. *Lenepheesh Hajjah*) Gen. ii. 7. the same words express the life of animals, C. i. 20. moving creatures that have life, Heb. living soul, *Nepheesh Hajjah*: and so throughout the first chapter. Accordingly *ψυχικος ανθρωπος*, Rom. ii. 14. which we translate the natural man, more properly, perhaps, the animal man, is synonymous with *σαρκικος*, carnal. Man is one substance. When the principle of life goes out, the body rests in the grave, till the morning of the resurrection. The reader may see every thing I wish to say on this subject. I Cor. xv.

THE

† See Burnet on the 39 Articles, Introduction.

THE eighth article asserts, that the three creeds, the Nicene, Athanasian, and the Apostles, ought thoroughly to be received and believed, for they may be proved by most certain warrants of holy scripture.

SOME think it strange to subscribe for the Apostles' creed, what the Apostles never heard of: (Happily for them they had no creeds!) for the creed of Athanasius, what was written, several hundred years after his death, and for the creed of Nice, great part of which was framed at Constantinople. Commentators, indeed, treat these mistakes as trifles.

THE name, at least, of Athanasius gives sanction to the creed. An inquirer therefore will ask, Who was this Athanasius?

THERE are few characters, about which men have been more divided. One party describing him as a saint of the first rank: the most distinguished champion of the truth, standing upright and firm, when all christendom declined, the whole world being against Athanasius, and Athanasius against the whole world; while the saint exhibited in his conduct towards his opponents all the prudence of the philosopher, and all the patience of the martyr.† Those who consider the Athanasian creed, the standard of christian truth, and Athanasius as the author of it, throw Arius, the heretic, into shade, to render Athanasius, the saint, conspicuous.

THE other party describe Athanasius, as a young petulant deacon of Alexandria, who raising a cry about heresy, made

† Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity. Lib. V. 42.

made it a ground for the most cruel barbarity, and the most restless ambition; procuring the banishment of Arius by artifice, and forcing himself into his seat by violence. Immorality, they say, was the cause of his ejection: but, "through seas of blood," he procured his re-establishment! A learned prelate, whose character exempts him from every suspicion of partiality, having taken his picture, held it up in a great assembly as exhibiting one of the monsters of mankind.* Had Athanasius penned the creed, he would have left behind him no favourable specimen of his character.

A PERSON, admiring Athanasius, approving the creed, and thinking the happiness of heaven, will be increased by the eternal torments of heretics, will relish its damnable part. And when he is prepared to subscribe, what nobody understands, what the sensible part of the nation laugh at, and what some merciful people cannot read, he will then be prepared to read fourteen times a year this detestable creed. "He that would be saved must thus think of the Trinity! This is the true faith, which unless a man keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly!"

IF I were called on to subscribe this article, self-love would incline me to refuse it. For I should recollect, that I have the Nicene creed also to subscribe. And if I had no mercy on others, I should wish to have mercy on myself.

THE

* Bishop of Clogher's Speech, made in the House of Lords, in Ireland, Feb. 2, 1756.

THE Nicene creed, (at least, part of it,) was framed at Nice, A.D. 325, to confirm the doctrines of Athanasius, and to exclude those of Arius. But the good fathers were not cool enough, to lay down their own sentiments; and we are presented with an Athanasian creed, expressive of Arian heresy! † This creed was accordingly subscribed by the disciples of Arius, and particularly by Eusebius, and Arius himself might have been restored to favour, but for the opposition of Athanasius. The Athanasian doctrine was, that Christ was very God (*αὐτοθεός*), co-eternal, co-equal, uncreated; that the persons were not to be confounded, nor the substance divided, and all were to be damned, who believed the contrary. The Nicene creed affirms, that Christ is God of God, *θεός ἐκ θεού*, light of light, very God of very God, and does absolutely both confound the persons, and divide the substance. The genuine creed, also closed with a gentle damnation, (though now omitted) against those, who should say, that Christ was of another Hypostasis, which is the language of the Athanasian creed. Thus by the two creeds, we are brought into an awkward situation, out of which I know not how we can deliver ourselves, but by throwing away both the creeds, and following Jesus our Master, who came not to destroy mens lives, but to save them.

† See Wilton's Review of some of the Articles.

C H A P. VI.

Remarks on Original, or Birth Sin; Sacrifice of Christ; Freewill; Good Works; Predestination.

“ORIGINAL sin (Art. 9.) is the FAULT and corruption of every man, who is gendered of the offspring of Adam; so that every person, born into the world, deserveth God’s wrath and damnation!”

THIS definition is Calvin’s,† who, among other curious particulars, adds, “that infants bring their own condemnation with them from their mother’s womb, being charged, not with another’s, but their own personal vice.” Let us take another word. “Before we beheld the light, says he, we are filthy and defiled in the sight of God.”

IN the history of the transgression of our first parents, which was a yielding to the sollicitation of pleasure, (in opposition to the command of God) allegorized under the character of a serpent,‡ we have no such dreadful
account

† Peccatum originale, says he, hæreditaria naturæ nostræ pravitas et corruptio est. Institut. L. II. C. i. § 8.

‡ Philo de mundi opificio, p. 27. Edit. Turnebi,

account of original sin: it need not surprize us, therefore, that Josephus, Philo,|| and the reputed Barnabas,† take no notice of it, and that the early christian writers were wholly unacquainted with it.

THE punishment denounced against our first parents seems to have been loss of natural existence, or an immediate, violent, and total death. In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely or utterly die, is the sentence of a judge denouncing the penalty annexed to a crime; and wherever the expression, Thou shalt die, occurs in the Old Testament, it always relates to immediate and violent death. On the repentance of Adam and Eve, the sentence of total death was commuted to one less severe, and, at the same time, suited to a state of imperfection. To the woman God said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow, &c. To Adam, Cursed is the ground for thy sake, &c.

As great stress is laid on the words, thou shalt die, in the controversy about original sin, I will produce some parallel texts, as quoted by Abauzit. "When God commanded Abimelech to restore Sarah to Abraham, If thou do not restore her, said he to him, know that thou shalt die." Another Abimilech issued a law in favour of Isaac and Rebecca; "Whosoever shall touch this man or his wife, shall die." Saul published an edict; "He who shall have committed this sin, were he my son Jonathan, he shall die." It is usual with Moses to conclude his laws with this threatening; "Whosoever shall
do

|| Ut sup. † What a fine opportunity he had of mentioning it, when speaking of our corruption, before we believe in God! S, xvi.

do such a thing shall die." Thus also the prophet Elisha says to the messenger, sent to him from the King of Syria; Go, say to him, Thou shalt certainly recover from this disease. Howbeit, the Lord hath shewed me, he shall surely die." * Mere natural death could not here be intended; for by the constitution of Adam, his body tended to dissolution: Inasmuch as thou art but dust, said God to him, and thou shalt one day return unto dust. So far as the posterity of Adam was affected by his punishment, they became the objects of compassion, certainly not of blame. As to everlasting torments, or (in the language of the Reformers) God's wrath and damnation, we may find them, I grant, in the glosses of divines, but shall search for them, in vain, in the sacred text: and what is more, endless sufferings, for the most wicked of mankind, are no where taught in the scriptures, nor were they known in the primitive church. Some of the earliest christian writers held, that the wicked, after a course of punishment, would become extinct. †

IN immediate connection with the introduction of death, by the first Adam, our mortal parent, is a title to an eternal existence by Christ, who though a mortal, like Adam, yet being sent on an important errand to the human race, is called "the second Adam, the Lord from heaven."

As I cannot infer the natural immortality of man from his present condition, so neither am I taught it in the inspired writings. The existence of man depended originally on the mere pleasure of God, his body tended to dissolution,

* Abauzit's Miscellanies. † See *Hermas*, *passim*.

dissolution, and, moreover, he lost his title to existence, afterwards, by disobeying his Creator. His continuance in life, then, must depend on the mere clemency of his Judge, who had said, "THE DAY thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." But had he any ground to expect a future state after death? This he had not. If after death he was raised again to life, his future existence must depend on the mere pleasure of God, in the same manner as did his existence at first. It should be further observed, that a resurrection after death, and a future state, made no part of the covenant at Sinai.* The law came in between Adam and Christ, that the offence might abound; it is, therefore, said to work wrath; and to be a ministration of death.

THE new covenant is very explicit on the doctrines of a resurrection of the body, and a future state; and at the same time, that death had passed upon all men; for that all men, being constituted with the same tendencies and inclinations, as Adam, had sinned. Christ is therefore called THE WAY, THE TRUTH, and THE LIFE; THE RESURRECTION, and THE LIFE, not merely, I think,

* The incomparable Mr. Hartley, supposed from the general belief of a future state in all ages, that men were not led into it merely from general reasons and analogies, but that it descended from the common fathers of mankind, and was the current opinion among the Jews. Observations on Man. Vol. II. p. 39. That the Jews had among them some notion of a future state, as well as other nations, I think very probable, by whatever means they got it; and that good Jews, as well as other good men, might be supported by the belief of it, I think not improbable. But that the covenant made with the Jews, through Moses, regarded temporal blessings merely, is, I think, incontestable.

I think, for teaching the doctrines, and exemplifying their truth in his own person, but “by tasting death for every man,” by dying he abolished death, he took away sin, or the punishment annexed to sin, DEATH, and having been rewarded with immortality for his obedience unto death, he is become the AUTHOR OF ETERNAL SALVATION to all those who obey him. His blood was shed for the remission of sins. Hence the Apostle speaks of him, as giving himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from the present evil world, according to the will of our God, and Father. The Gospel is called a Justification of life, or a right to life (*δικαιωσις της ζωης*), and the obedience of Christ is said to flow to the same extent as the disobedience of Adam, and to have a contrary effect: as by the disobedience of one the many,† all mankind, were made, treated as, or put down as sinners, by losing a right to existence; so by the obedience of one shall the many, all mankind, be made, treated as, or constituted righteous, that is, have a right to life.

THIS system therefore supposes, that the obedience of Christ has a higher place in the christian scheme, than that of mere example, though it, by no means, supposes that the death of Christ was a sacrifice for sin, according to the sense of the Reformers: for they maintained, that Christ was a sacrifice (in the strict sense of the word) to take away the wrath of God: ‡ but infinite benevolence requires no foreign motive to dispose it to love it's creatures: neither can a finite creature commit an infinite offence;

† *οι πολλοι*. See Rom. v. 15. to the end of the chapter.

* *κατεσταθσαν*.

‡ Compare Articles ii. ix. xxxi. See also the Homilies.

offence; nor can a finite creature make an infinite satisfaction.

FROM this view of salvation by Christ may be collected, what justification by faith means. That we shall rise again, and live in a future state at all, we owe to Christ: for having no right to a future existence after death, we receive it as a free gift of God, through Jesus Christ. Remission of sins on our repentance, and eternal life through Jesus Christ, appear to me the leading doctrines of the gospel: and to these Jews and Gentiles, without any regard to the superior advantages of the former, or the past idolatries of the latter, were admitted by faith. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. The Reformers made no distinction between present privileges, and a future improvement. This distinction, however, ought certainly to be made. † Paul's Epistle to the Romans, was, indeed, strictly speaking, written to settle a controversy between the Jews and Gentiles, at a particular period. But this general truth is to be collected from all the Epistles; that religious advantages are now afforded us, and that we are answerable for the use of them. Every man will be rewarded according to his works. This doctrine makes the Epistles in perfect harmony with each other. The earlier fathers also made this distinction: † the doctrine of justification by faith only, to the exclusion of good works, as held by the Reformers, was agreeable to the calvinistic notion: and hence sprung at the reformation the Gospellers, Antinomians, who turned the grace of God to wantonness.*

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† Taylor's Key to the Romans. † Clement's Epistle.

* Burnet's Hist. of the Reformation,

I WILL just obviate an objection, that may be started to a hint, which I dropt against endless torments. The words eternal, everlasting, ages of ages, and the like expressions, are apt to convey to an english ear the idea of never ceasing : but the words, that answer to them in the Hebrew and Greek languages, do not necessarily convey that idea. They usually, indeed, intend a long duration, but whether it be endless, can only be ascertained by the object, and concomitant circumstances ; they being applied indiscriminately to Jehova, to Christ, to an estate, to doors, to mountains, to hills, to the happiness of the righteous, and to the punishment of the wicked. As to Jehova, his years have no end. The kingdom of Christ is called an everlasting kingdom, and yet he must lay it down : compare 2 Pet. i. 2. with 1 Cor. xv. 24. mountains and hills are everlasting, yet all these things shall be dissolved. The happiness of the saints is said to be eternal, as well as the punishment of the wicked, but the former is derived from him, who has the power of an ENDLESS life ; their inheritance is INCORRUPTIBLE, it fadeth not away ; and of the regions of the blessed it is expressly said, There shall be no DEATH there. But no such expressions, I apprehend, are applied to the punishment of the wicked, that is, there are no expressions, in the scriptures, from whence we can fairly infer, that punishment will not have an end.

THE 10th. article says, That man cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength to faith and calling upon God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing. This I think true, though not in the sense, in which the Reformers held it. For man being a moral agent,

agent, that is capable of reward and punishment, he must have a voluntary power over his actions, and a capacity to excite those desires, and affections, in which religion consists; or, in other words, he must have a natural strength to do what God requires at his hands. How, otherwise, can be reconciled the frequent assurances on the part of God, that he willeth the good of all men, his numerous exhortations with man not to be wanting to himself, the general promises, invitations and encouragements, which run through the current of the scriptures, and after all, the solemn declarations that the future punishment of sinners will be the effect of their own obstinacy? This system, therefore, supposes that man has a natural strength for religion, or according to the doctrine of Mr. Hartley, freewill in the practical and popular sense. By the grace of God, the Reformers meant the assistance of God the holy Ghost, the third person in the Trinity.

At the same time, believing, as I do, that man is one substance, that mind is the effect of a certain organization of matter, that every motion of thought and desire is to be traced ultimately to impressions on the nerves, by vibration communicated to the brain, that the will follows irresistably and necessarily the most powerful impressions, that all the motives of religion are the gracious appointment of the Deity, and have a fixed and determined end, that is, agreeably to the system of Mr. Hartley, not admitting freewill in the philosophical sense, or "that different determinations can follow, where the previous circumstances are the same," I refer every thing, in the most unlimited sense to God, who is ALL

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IN ALL. In this scheme all religion proceeds from the GRACE of God, and so far it agrees with the system of the Reformers. But here, again, it differs from their system: for as God's tender mercies are over all his works, as God willeth the salvation of all men, this scheme supposes, that the grace of God will, at length, prevail over all, and that infinite benevolence cannot possibly be defeated of its gracious intentions. As, therefore, the voluntary powers of the mind have not yet been awakened in all, by the motives of religion, it will follow, that such will be the final issue of things; so that all beings will, at length, be made happy in God!

THAT the end of the great and good Being, in calling creatures into existence was the communication of happiness, and that the scheme of his providence, and the plan of redemption, are the continuation of his benevolent design, is the language of revelation. The scripture doctrine of ELECTION or PREDESTINATION, is in perfect harmony with his universal benevolence.

WHEN God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees, to be the Father of a numerous people, the design was, that, In him all the families of the earth should be blessed; and when God called the nation of the Jews to great temporal blessings, and religious privileges, separating them from the other nations, he intended to treasure up streams of information, which might flow out and enrich the nations; that in the fulness of time there should be born among that people, a deliverer, whose commission was to all mankind. They, who for this purpose, were made a separate people, are called, without any re-

gard to a future state, his elect; sometimes, in consequence of the deliverances, which they experienced from God, they are called his saved, his redeemed, and, sometimes, being set apart to answer the purposes of heaven, they are called sanctified.†

JESUS Christ, and the Apostles, were Jews: being accustomed to the Jewish scriptures, they adopt Jewish forms of speech. The Jewish nation had been called God's elect. But there was a great mystery, which had not been made known to the sons of men, as it was afterwards revealed to the Apostles, and Prophets, by his Spirit, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, by the Gospel, being predestinated to the adoption of children, according to the good pleasure of him, who worketh all things after the secret purpose of his will. Eph. i. The Jews, being cast off for their unbelief, the Gentiles, by the mere favour of God, are entrusted with the Gospel — this was the gift of God — they are said to be saved by grace, and are called the elect. Those, also, who were appointed to any office in this dispensation, such as partaking the ministry with our Lord, while on earth, or publishing the gospel more at large to the nations, are said to be chosen, appointed, or elected thereto.

YET people, thus privileged, might be cut off. Rom. xi. Paul was a chosen vessel, yet he used caution, least he also should be a cast-away, and even Judas was one of the chosen, and yet Judas was a traitor. Moreover, as the end, which God had in view in this gracious dispensation,

† See Taylor's Key to the Romans.

dispensation, was the holiness of those, who were under it, hence they were said to be chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, Eph. i. They were chosen through sanctification, and belief of the truth. But is the notion of distinguishing a few individuals, and reprobating the rest, a doctrine of Christianity? Indeed, absolute predestination has not been agreeable to the taste of modern divines. Learned pens, therefore, have endeavoured to shew, that the article will bear a milder interpretation; some assert, that what is now called the arminian, is the true sense; and others, that the article was designedly left open; so that a disciple of Calvin, or Arminius, may with equal safety subscribe it. Let it, however, be observed, that the Reformers were doctrinal Calvinists. Without multiplying quotations, I think it sufficient to refer to the celebrated catechism of Dean Ponet, published in Edw. the VIth's. reign, to which Cranmer and Ridley set their seal, and to the sermons of Bishop Latimer. And, that Calvinism continued to be the doctrine of Elizabeth's reign, is clear from the Latin edition of the aforesaid catechism, published by Dean Nowel, approved by the clergy in convocation, and dedicated to the Archbishops and Bishops, and also from the writings of Jewel,† Fox,|| and Hooker.§ Would calvinist divines pen arminian articles? Burnet, in his History of the Reformation,† acknowledges, that the Reformers in general taught absolute predestination; but in another place, I think, remarks, that reprobation, however, is not mentioned

† See his Exposition of the Thessalonians.

|| Bradford's Letter to certain Friends, with Fox's Remarks. Fox. V. I. § A Sermon on the Perpetuity of Faith to the Elect, at the end of the Ecclesiastical Polity.

† Part II. B. i. p. 113.

oned in the article.* But how will calvinist divines separate one from the other? Calvin himself never attempted it. "If we are not able, says he, to assign a reason, why God shews mercy to his favourites, unless, that so it please him; neither in the reprobation of others, shall we have any reasons, except his own will."

A WRITER, who had sufficient success in proving, that calvinism is the doctrine of the church of England, did not manage the controversy with any tolerable appearance, when he aimed to shew, that the early fathers held the same doctrine.† Barnabas calls Christians the "new people" in contradistinction to the old œconomy; but there is nothing in this writer that speaks the doctrine of Calvin, even as quoted by Mr. Toplady. He passes over Hermas, whether from a belief, that he was not an apostolic writer, or from a conviction, that his writings contradicted his favourite doctrine, I will not determine. That his writings are totally inconsistent with calvinism is certain, though I am not disposed to claim for Hermas the character of an apostolic man, nor even for Barnabas. The writings, that bear their names were written, most probably, by people of that name, though not, perhaps, by the men, to whom they are ascribed. Mr. Toplady's quotations from Clemens are extremely partial. Clemens addresses the church at Corinth, as called, sanctified, as the Apostles do. He says, a great multitude of elect people were assembled together to the Apostles; and in the next section speaks "of the glorious,

* His Exposition of the Articles.

† Toplady's Historic Proof of the Doctrinal Calvinism of the Church of England, Vol. II. p. 118.

glorious, and venerable rule of our holy calling." What is that? "Let us consider, says he, what is good, what is agreeable, and acceptable to him, who made us. Let us steadily fix our eyes on the blood of Christ, and see how precious his blood was to God, which being shed for our salvation, procured the grace of repentance for the whole world."† Mr. Toplady very prudently suppressed this passage. Clemens's application of several passages of scripture to the situation of the Corinthians, and what he says of justification is totally inconsistent with Mr. Toplady's notion of predestination: it being exactly the same, as that laid down by Mr. Taylor in his Key to the Romans. Remarks similar to these will apply to Polycarp and Ignatius. As to the latter, he addresses whole churches, as predestinated before all ages, elect, and the like; people advanced in holiness, and eminently useful in the christian profession, he calls elect, in the same manner as the Apostles. The Ephesians, in the Epistle to whom Mr. Toplady would have us believe, there is so much of his dear doctrine, are thus addressed by Ignatius; "Let us reverence and fear the long suffering of God, that we may not come into condemnation. Let us fear his future wrath, or love his present grace."‡ It is a very easy matter to prove, that the primitive church held absolute predestination, if we bring our own interpretation of the term, and apply it to the same term, wherever it occurs, which this author has done.

THE assertion of Limborch is true: prior to the rise of Augustin, the primitive churches knew little or nothing

† Sect. vii. Compare together sections xxix. xxx. &c, to the xxxvi. Edit. Russel.

‡ Sect. xi.

thing about predestination; understanding that sense of it received by the Reformers: and even Calvin || himself, the great disciple of Augustin, would have corrected the mistakes of Mr. Toplady on this subject. Augustin might well say of his doctrines of original sin, predestination, and reprobation, (adopting the words of Chrysostom,)

Fundamentum nostræ philosophiæ est Humilitas!

FOR he was a frail saint! And it has been thought by some, that his system was generated by his own passions, as well as by his disputes with Pelagius and Celestius. A famous devotional performance of this admired saint argues, I confess, great ingenuousness; but, Does it not also imply, that his piety gained few conquests over his passions?

THE 6th. Article says, that, holy scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation. A disciple of Christ, therefore, going for ordination might say, with the author of the Confessional, and Dr. Jebb, Why then, must we subscribe any thing besides holy scripture? Further, he subscribes to this proposition, “that in the name of the holy scriptures we do understand the canonical books of the Old and New Testament, (which are afterwards enumerated) of whose authority there was never any doubt in the church.”

THE books, which we call apocryphal, by the church of Rome are deemed canonical: and of those who do
not

|| Veteres tamen omnes, excepto Augustino, sic in hac re variant aut perplexe loquuntur, ut certi fere nihil ex eorum scriptis referre liceat, Institut.

not say after her, she says, Anathema. † Though modern churchmen will scarce imitate the language of the council of Trent, yet, Does not this article bear hard upon some of the true church?

FOR, on looking into this matter, the Epistle to the Hebrews, the general Epistle of James, the 2d. Epistle of Peter, the 2d. and 3d. of John, and the general Epistle of Jude, will be found among those, whose authority has been doubted. The authority of the Apocalypse has been very much disputed. Some have thought, it was not written by St. John, but by St. Peter; some have said, it was composed by no apostolic man, but by Cerinthus: Eusebius thought it was written by John, the Priest. The council of Lardicea, (held in 360) first made a Catalogue of the canonical books of scripture: but they omitted the Apocalypse; nor was it received, as canonical, universally, in the Greek church, till the 10th. century. So much was its authority doubted! No less a man, than Monsr. Abauzit wrote a learned essay to prove it's inauthenticity. Many ancient and modern christians have doubted the authenticity of the two first chapters of Matthew, and the first chapter of Luke. As to the Song of Solomon, those, who can spiritualize it, and find Christ and the church in it, will, doubtless, think it canonical. Christians, less seraphical, say, it is a beautiful song, with all the high colouring of eastern imagery, and that it was a dialogue between an amorous prince, and his favourite lady.*

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† Bennet on the 39 Articles. p. 61. 2d. Edit.

* Lady Montague has given us some Turkish verses, addressed to the Sultana, of which she justly remarks, they most wonderfully resemble the Song of Solomon. Vol. I. Letter 30. They were written by Ibrahim Bassa, a young Solomon; the reigning favourite, a poet, and a lover.

I NEED not be supposed to have given here any opinions of my own. These are, however, facts; and they may help us to form a judgement, how far the authority of the canonical books has never been doubted.

Now, Will it not be hard to anathematize all the good men, who have disputed the canonicalness of the preceding books, many of whom will be found to have been great ornaments to christianity, by saying, they are not of the church? Yet this we must do, if we affirm, the not doubting of the authority of the canonical books, is one of the marks of the true church.

HAVING endeavoured to give, in the preceding pages, an epitome of the doctrines of Christianity, I will just observe, that respecting the truths received by Revelation, the Apostles would necessarily be of one judgement; however they might be mistaken, and disagree about other matters.† Now it argues no presumption to suppose, that the Reformers in the interpretation of these doctrines, might be, sometimes, mistaken, though it would imply extreme vanity, to say of one's own opinions, these are certainly the truth. This only I know, that my Inquiry has been made with the strictest impartiality. But if half the preceding remarks be true, Bishop Warburton hath asserted with more confidence, than truth, that the DOCTRINES of christianity have not been ALTERED.‡ And if he has been too hasty in his assertions,

† Καθαπερ γαρ εν λυρα μια, διαφοροι μεν αι νευραι, μια δε η συμφωνια· ετω και εν τω χορω των αποστολων διαφερα μεν τα προσοπα, μια δε η διδασκαλια. Chrysostomi in S. Ignatium Homilia.

‡ Alliance. Postscript to the fourth Edit. p. 300. See p. 242. of this Inquiry,

assertions, it will follow, that church and state have exceeded their powers, as christians, by the mutual contract: on so precarious a thread hangs the famous Alliance!

C H A P. VII.

Whether Subscription be consistent with the Character of a Christian. Some serious Reflections on its evil Tendency.

BUT I ask again, Is Subscription consistent with the character of Christ's disciples, or with the precepts of christianity? By a disciple of Christ, I mean one, who being convinced of his divine mission, devotes himself to the study of his doctrine. The reason, and conscience of such an one must submit to the TEACHER of TRUTH, the great EXAMPLER of morals. In regard of his fellow-christians, he may become a teacher, but he must advance no higher. Be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are Brethren. Now, as Christ was his disciples, master in nothing but religion, it will follow, that our Lord in such a com-

mand as this, must have his eye on religious dominion: and, indeed, the term, Rabbi, proves this; which related to a class of men, raised by office, and distinguished by titles, above their fellow-creatures, and who, in consequence, had advanced themselves to an unwarrantable influence over their understandings; but Christ charges his disciples to betray no love of dominion, nor even to be like those religious masters, the Rabbis.

SUCH, indeed, is the genius of christianity, that the teachers is rather an office of service, than dominion, with this view our Lord performed on his disciples the most menial employments, saying, If I then your Lord and Master, wash your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet; and the Apostles exercised no dominion over their brethren's faith, but were helpers of their joy.

BUT let me ask the christian world, Are our laws of church discipline, our habits of magisterial distinction, our arrangement of ecclesiastical aggrandizement, our addresses of religious homage, agreeable to the genius of christianity? What disciple of Christ has a right to frame religious laws, or to demand a Subscription to them? To affect titles of religious superiority, or to speak to the christian world with the tone of authority?||

INDEED, the turning point in the controversy with all establishments, as the judicious author of the Confessional has observed, is this, Is there any lawgiver, any Master, but he who speaks by the authority of God? Some
very

|| Παντες τε σταπεινοφρανειτε, μηδεν αλαζονευομενοι, υποτασσομενοι μαλλον, η υποτασσοντες, is characteristic of the genius of Christianity. Clement. Epist. ad Cor. Sect. xi.

very thinking men have been converted to the church of Rome, by considering the necessity of an infallible head of controversy; which is but a different expression for the authority of the church in matters of religion.

2. If the heads and leaders of christian churches exercise an antichristian authority, in demanding Subscription, he who subscribes yields a subjection no less inconsistent with the character of a christian. He binds himself to believe not the holy scriptures, but the church's interpretation of them; he swears obedience to a Master, ("a power to decree") and either mediately or immediately to every thing, which that power has imposed, or shall hereafter impose. He receives a system of religious tenets, which he is bound on oath to believe, and a body of discipline, which he pledges himself on oath to obey. Having already defined a disciple of Christ, and shewn, that all authority exercised over conscience is inconsistent with that profession, from the same kind of argument it will follow, that it is inconsistent with the character of Christ's disciples to yield obedience. I will beg leave to say, before a person subscribes 39 Articles, he should be able to shew, that Subscription does not imply a subjection of the conscience; or else, that the conscience may be subject to human authority, that laws, which enjoin both the matter of prayer, the attitude, and motion of the body; the habits to be worn, and the sentiments to be believed, can be punctually observed, so as to leave the Christian free. Is Subscription to the authority of "a Supreme Governor, in all spiritual and ecclesiastical concerns;" is swearing, as every deacon does, "reverently to obey his ordinary, and the

chief ministers of the church, and those to whom the government and charge is given, consistent with the Christian's rule of obedience?" Even a right reverend Father in God swears obedience to his most reverend Father in God.

3. BUT I ask a question more serious still, Does not Subscription affect christian morality? As the chief object of philosophy is truth, that of Christianity is to promote virtue, or, more properly speaking, its large aim, is to excite, at once, love of truth, and the practice of virtue, the excellence, and the happiness of man. Hence, it is, that though a Christian should ever pursue truth, and recollect, that truth is but one, yet as diversity of judgement will exist, moral principle must distinguish every christian, from thence he must form his character, and regulate his conduct. The Gospel is calculated to advance religious principle to the highest perfection. It is a complete rule of moral action, of a milder and more gracious nature, indeed, than the law; yet, still it is a rule; and from it's goodness receives it's peculiar dignity and excellence. The Apostle, therefore, beautifully calls it, the law of the spirit of life, or the law of spiritual life. Paul himself paid a conscientious regard to it, and called upon his fellow-christians, to let their conversation be as became the gospel of Christ. Christians are called upon to be followers of Paul, as Paul was of Christ. It must, indeed, be allowed, that many things in the scriptures will be the matter of reasonable doubt, and of just dispute, and have been so, from the earliest ages of Christianity to the present. But real Christianity is ever the same; too great to receive it's
peculiar

peculiar features from local peculiarities, and too good to be liable to immoral constructions. Yes! If there be a religion, which aims to promote love of truth, and sincerity, justice and integrity, moderation and benevolence, meekness and contentment, and to mark with the most unequivocal disapprobation the contrary vices, hypocrisy, pride, covetousness and ambition, it is the religion of the blessed Jesus.

MANY immoral tendencies, and practices, have been charged on the christian priesthood, as unhappily connected with it's profession; nor has the accusation been always brought by malevolence, envy, or disappointed ambition, but by men who have studied human nature, and been friends to mankind.

How, they have said, has Subscription weakened the authority of conscience, and tarnished the lustre of christian morality! Benevolence, the ornament of human nature, the glory of Christianity, from being a generous effusion of heart towards all who fear God, and love our Redeemer, how hath it been weakened by Subscription! Articles and Creeds make heretics, and schismatics; and hence come wars and fightings among us; while infidels triumph and say, See, how these Christians love!

As long as human nature is subject to frailty, Subscription will injure all, who submit to it, though different individuals will be affected in different ways.

CONSIDER the situation of a youth on taking his first degree. At a time of life, when it is impossible he should have properly weighed the nature of Subscription,
when

when arranging the results of his academical studies, his thoughts are wholly directed to a public examination, he is called upon to subscribe. This Subscription is made on oath. Now considering him, as making his first step into public life, may not Subscription make an impression, which will affect his future conduct? If duplicity and mental reserve be practiced on this solemn occasion before God, what security can he give, that he will not practice it before men? *Amor Dei est fundamentum virtutis.*

BUT, at Cambridge, a great point has been thought gained, by a *bonâ fide* Subscription. † Yet if he become a public teacher, the terms are then enlarged. The discipline, the ceremonies, the doctrines, the creeds, every Article must be subscribed literally, grammatically, heartily; and at a period, when reason, philosophy, and a knowledge of the sacred scriptures have proved many of them, at least, false. When church rulers, have themselves acknowledged them absurd — and when this is now become the sentiment of the most sensible part of the nation. What will be the consequence?

MEN of timorous minds will suppress inquiry, lest conviction should endanger their comforts, and they will continue indolent, and ignorant, instead of labouring to know the truth, they will laugh away their time in trifles and impertinence, or sink into voluptuousness and ease. And these ministers of Christ become public nuisances!

HAPPY

† See p. 3, 4. of this Inquiry. Of the *bona fide* Subscription, Mr. Frend justly remarks, *Idem monachus, sed alio cucullo indutus!* Thoughts on Subscription. 2d Ed.

HAPPY would it be for the church of England, if the dissipated part of her clergy, only, were injured by Subscription! But, alas! men of the best dispositions, and of the most upright intentions will feel its malignant influence. Their honest hearts will be kept in subjection to ancient Prejudices! They will too easily acquiesce in public authority! And, thinking it presumptuous to pursue inquiry out of that circle, which has been drawn by their religious superiours, they will receive trifles as matters of importance, and the mistakes of frail mortals for the realities of divine TRUTH!

MEN of speculation and thought will, perhaps, indulge themselves in religious investigation—but, will their speculations and their practice be consistent? If men believe one thing, and profess another, what shall we say. Yet, alas! how often will this be the case!

THE enlightened and gracious clergy, (so some choose to compliment each other) have been known sometimes to have had light thrown into their minds on Subscription, and some serious impressions have been made. Those articles, particularly, which relate to church government, they have, many of them, been secretly disaffected to. But what a prospect of usefulness in the church! They love the serious dissenters—but a dissenting meeting has little that is friendly to ministerial importance—Ah!—heart of man! How often will cant, and grimace, supply the place of love of truth! And the desire of popularity furnish cogent arguments against the doctrine of the cross!

SUBSCRIPTION

SUBSCRIPTION tends to make the most sacred things matters of form, the most awful things trifling and unimportant. What made heathens tremble,|| Christians “practice with a sigh, or a smile.” And what evils may be expected, when truth becomes a play-thing, and an oath, an affair of sport. Allured by a present interest, or in prospect of want, do the laws of religion operate, will the obligation of oaths bind? Dreadful then was the day when an oath was first applied to the present purpose—“oaths directed against the natural sentiments of mankind, never bind.”*—Ah! what shall I say—read the writings of divines, they plead for oaths; they plead also for the violation of them!

SUBSCRIPTION to any Articles would endanger virtue. Let them be ever so true, they will become the foundation of hypocrisy, and prevarication. For in pursuit of present gain, men do not usually ask, “What is true, but what is convenient?” But what shall we say, if the system itself be full of corruption? Men may innocently hold many errors, while they are not discovered. But when error is once detected, to profess it still as truth, is monstrous guilt! That the present Articles are a string of errors, is not the mere opinion of a solitary inquirer, nor a sentiment of modern date.† And while in this more improved state of society, the same false system continues to be subscribed, the moral evil will

|| Οστις δε τῶτων (i. e. ὀρκῶν) συνοιδεν εαυτῷ παρεμνησθῆναι, τῶτον & ποτ’ αν εγω ευδαιμονισαι, τον γαρ θεων πολεμον, ουκ οίδα ετε απο ποιῶ αν ταχῶ φευγων τις αποφευγοι, ετε ες οποιον αν σκοτῶ αποδυη, ετε οπως αν εις οχυρον αποσαιη.
Xenophon de Expeditione Cyri. L. II. * Beccaria.

† See Chap. viii. of the Second Part of this Inquiry.

will be in proportion to our increase of knowledge.—It cannot be qualified; “In vain we talk of tacit reformations.” These only teach us a lamentable truth — that our light is more than our virtue. If men see the straight line of conduct, and still pursue the crooked one of error, with whatever pleasing prospects they amuse themselves, their path does not lead to honour.

THUS will Subscription affect, thus has it affected individuals: but when we consider an enormous system, raised on principles, so injurious to Christianity, receiving the sanction of law, authorized by custom, and a Subscription to its truth becoming the practice of a nation, the evil becomes infinite. A contemplative mind, accustomed to trace effects to causes, will pursue much national wickedness to this source—What thus becomes established, continues for ages, and stabs principle in its very vitals!

I HAVE often represented to myself some venerable Reformers of ancient time, still residing in this world; and to their strict principle, adding all the light of modern improvements, contemplating the evils of Subscription.† Such men were Bishop Latimer, Socinus, Mr. Barclay, and Dr. Jebb, men of different religious persuasions, and different in their manners; but animated alike with piety, and pure morality, and over-awed neither by kings, statesmen, philosophers, or priests.

HAD

† See Bishop Latimer's Sermons, and Mr. Barclay's excellent Address to Charles II. prefixed to his Apology for the Quakers.

HAD they been addressing majesty, they might have said, Oh! Sire, “by reason of swearing the land mourneth.” As the king of a brave and generous people, hold thyself the guardian of their civil and religious liberties. But let the empire of christian kings be not over the faith, but the affections of his people. Thou art called, and thy forefathers were called the defenders of the faith. That title ceases to be a jewel in thy crown. Truth rises from a basis, which will give it support, and the arm of authority can give it no strength. Profess that religion, which thou believest to be true, but intermeddle not with the faith of thy christian subjects. Encourage not thy subjects to tamper with oaths: when the eloquence of the passions pleads, the honours and riches of the world have great size: thither the expectations and desires of mankind will hasten. But when conscience is, indeed, bartered for riches, when the sacred name of the King of nations is prostituted, when oaths are treated as political manœuvres, and religion as the art of governing mankind, will the morals of thy subjects receive no injury? Be not surprized to find prelates without piety, and statesmen without honour. Know, that thy prelates, thy statesmen, and thy priests, are many of them too well taught, inwardly to assent to those maxims, to which they swear, or to believe those creeds, to which they subscribe. Ah! Sire, “by reason of swearing the land mourneth.” Are there no Reformers in modern times? Should such men arise, let not princes retard their wishes. Listen not to the voice of prelates. They, alas! have an interest in error.*

HAD

* Ενεκα δε χρηματων μηδενα θεον ομοσης, μηδ αν ευορκειν μελλης. Δοξεις γαρ τοις μεν επιορκειν, τοις δε φιλοχρηματος εχειν. Isocrates ad Dimonicum apud Stobæum.

HAD they been addressing the prelates and the clergy, they might have said, By the courtesy of mankind ye are approached with titles of religious respect. Yet, inquirers after truth suffer those titles to have no superstitious influence on them. The voice of simplicity and truth addresses you. If ye be, indeed, disciples of the great Teacher, prove it by attending to the dictates of reason, and to the precepts of Christianity. Illustrious were the men, who laboured to improve society in the 16th. century, we call them Reformers, and think them entitled to the name. Nor were others less so, who, through the prejudices and imperfect knowledge of former times, were called heretics, and schismatics. Not however to dispute this point, had we not weighed the circumstances of the present controversy, we should have felt the strangest surprize at the state of the church since the Reformation. Was not the Reformation left unfinished?† Did not the Reformers avow it? Did they not suppose that future times would make further improvements? But have their expectations been answered? Alas! far from promoting a Reformation, ye are the very men, who have laboured to obstruct it. Do ye, indeed, believe the Articles of the church? Have not some of you petitioned against Subscription? If ye believe not the articles with what grace can ye impose them on others? Ye lords and masters of the church, by law appointed, ye christian Rabbis, “by reason of swearing the land mourneth.” Many an abandoned youth will take oaths without shame. But some have moral feelings,

† See Pierce's Vindication, Part I, and Ch, vii. viii, of the Second Part of this Inquiry.

ings, and they tremble in your presence. Imagine not the pale down-cast look, always flows from the sight of episcopal greatness. There is a voice within, which says, "Reverence an oath." And in spite of every salvo, that voice will sometimes be heard. When a petitioner for orders takes in his hand a Greek Testament, his speech sometimes falters. Do not misinterpret that disorder. It proceeds not always from a doubt of success, or from conscious ignorance, but, frequently, from a sound understanding, too well convinced, that the contents of the sacred Book and of the articles, are at variance. And do ye still continue to vote for darkness? Hear then the charge, that has been brought against your order; that prelates are by office enemies to liberty, and obstacles to the progress of truth. And while ye combine against mankind to retain your own greatness, and keep them in ignorance to render yourselves conspicuous, and by countenancing ancient superstitions and absurdities, retard Reformation, affect no surprize at the increase of infidelity. The present system of priesthood has no proper strength to resist it. On the contrary, from that quarter it receives its principal support. Prelacy is founded in error, and supported by worldly policy. Were we to charge it with superstition, that accusation would, comparatively, be inconsiderable. We charge it with crimes of the grossest nature. Time was, when kings were formed into tyrants, and the people into slaves, by prelacy. And we still charge pride and ambition, cruelty and oppression, impiety and hypocrisy on prelacy. Every mark of the kingdom of antichrist we charge on prelacy. And on Subscriptions and oaths, by
which

which ye bind fast ancient errors, and unrighteously imprison the truth, we charge every species of abomination. "By reason of swearing the land mourneth."

HAD they been addressing our seats of learning, they would, perhaps, have been sparing of compliments. They would have said; Genius and literature we approve and admire, but in proportion only to their real advantage to society. Many literary discoveries, within the two last centuries, have enlightened mankind.—Have no improvements been made in the art of government, of ethics, and of theology?—Conceal it not from mankind! Such discoveries have been made, which undermine Subscription to the very root, and ye are in possession of them. By the force of genius ye have darted upon some truths, the evidence of which ye cannot now resist: an acquaintance with sacred literature has taught you the gross impositions, which have misled mankind. Dare to undeceive the christian world! Take the mask from priestcraft. Court not worldly honour, at the expence of TRUTH. Imitate Jesus, your Master, and shun not the cross. Be benevolent, generous, and independent—Do society the lasting growing benefit, to exhibit truth.—And future ages, shall rise up and bless you! We are not, and ye know it, contending for trifles. It is not a surplice, a gown, or a cross, which is the ground of complaint. But something of far greater importance. "By reason of swearing the land mourneth." But if instead of stripping the mask from priestcraft—ye wear it yourselves.—If the weight, which ye ought to throw into the scale of truth, you throw into that of error. If
ye

ye study to sophisticate the understandings of mankind, and to make the worse appear the better cause. If so, be not deceived, what a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Genius and literature are entitled to respect, but so far only, as they benefit society:—when they conceal errors, which they ought to expose; when they countenance maxims, which they ought to discredit, a genius is below a fool, and a philosopher beneath a clown.

THEY would, perhaps, have reminded the University of Cambridge, that many voices both of dissenters,* and its own members, have addressed them, bearing testimony against religious oppression. They might have reminded it of the noble testimony of one of its Tutors (still recent in their memories) blushing, in the face of the University, for the age and country, in which he lived, and for the honour of that learned seminary.† They themselves also might have blushed, that this testimony had only been answered by an ejection from a respectable employment, and from the board of a CHRISTIAN SOCIETY!‡ They would still have reminded it of the generous efforts, || that have been made to deliver one of the most respectable seminaries in Europe from the cruel bondage of Subscription: and encouraged by such examples, and aware, of the extensive powers of a University, they would hope, that the spirit of liberty

* Alludes to several Publications of Mr. Robinson's against Subscription.

† Alludes to a Sermon, preached by Mr. Frend at St. Mary's.

‡ See Appendix to Mr. Frend's Thoughts on Subscription, 2d. Edit.

|| By Mr. Tyrwhit, Dr. Jebb, and Dr. Edwards,

liberty would soon arise, and impatient of antichristian restraints, would throw open the avenues to truth.

As some of the preceding remarks are made with great freedom, and may appear to some to favour of illiberality, justice to myself requires me to make the following declaration. In regard to myself, then, independent of a disposition, not naturally disposed to invective, and of a conviction of my own fallibility, other powerful motives conspire to restrain the fallies of rash censure, and to eradicate the seeds of malevolence. I have to take shame, that the hand, which now writes against Subscription, hath yet subscribed itself; and though I never entered the church, and have kept aloof from many other agreeable prospects, I claim no merit, and think myself entitled to no praise; acting frequently, as I have done, both in regard to the church, and other views, from suspicions, surmizes, and partial discoveries, rather than from clear views, and settled convictions. Amid the frailties of one's own nature, the disorders of society, and those great declensions from christian truth and simplicity, which have taken place in the christian world, Who can understand his errors? Folly and affliction are interwoven in the life of man; so as to make this acknowledgement of all others the most reasonable, not unto us, Jehova, not unto us, but to thy name be the praise. Oh! Jehova; righteousness belongeth only unto thee; but unto us confusion of face! Besides the religious principles, which I hold, are utterly inconsistent with a malevolent, and illiberal spirit of judging. For believing, as I do, that the rational, as well as the material world, are subject to laws, imposed on it by infinite

finite power and wisdom, I conclude it will, also, be overruled by infinite benevolence. The toils and pains of the afflicted, the disappointments of the young and sanguine, the anxieties and pressures of the aged, in short, the whole compass of human misery, is but preparatory to, and, perhaps, necessary for, a more complete and durable happiness; and in the same manner, all the errors that have been sown in the world, and all the obliquities of human conduct, together with their concomitant evils, and punishments, are preparing the way for a perfect exhibition of truth, and a firm, permanent, eternal virtue. It was expedient (doubtless) in the divine œconomy, (for whatsoever is done upon earth, God doeth it,) that the gold and silver of divine truth should be debased, that so its partial blessings might be accommodated to the imperfect conceptions of the nations, and it may be necessary, that some of the base coin should yet be current. But the time will come, when every thing, that is false, will disappear, and pure, unadulterated Christianity be more clearly understood, and more highly prized, after a temporary debasement: it being the prerogative of the great Being, to bring good out of evil. Yes! the ancient prophecies must be yet fulfilled, every tumult be silenced, and every disorder of society rectified by the glorious gospel. The peaceful reign of the King of truth is yet to come. The nations must learn war no more. The man of sin must be wholly consumed and destroyed. The kingdoms of the world must become the kingdoms of our God and his Christ. In short, we look for a new heaven, and new earth, wherein dwelleth **RIGHT-
OUSNESS.**

THESE

THESE considerations make me at perfect ease in regard to the conduct of my fellow creatures, and where I may, in any part of this work, seem to act inconsistently with this profession, I would be considered as expressing a just indignation against the evils necessarily attendant on an erroneous constitution of things, rather than as trifling with the imperfections of individuals.

AT the same time, I survey the corruptions, that have overspread the protestant world with strong feelings, and though I entirely agree with Mr. Hartley in his judgement of the corruptions of all religious establishments, I can, by no means, accede to the following sentiment of that great man. "It follows, saith he, that good men should submit to the ecclesiastical powers, that be, for conscience sake, as well as to civil ones."* For, if all religious establishments are the contrivance of human folly, and if their destruction is foretold by divine prescience, if the same wisdom, that permits them for a time, is, by means, preparing the way for their total demolition; and further, if what unites gives strength and perpetuity to a building, and if a separation only weakens and dissolves it, then, ought this language to be received by Christians; "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and TOUCH not the UNCLEAN THING."

* Hartley's Observations on Man. Vol, II. p. 372.

I trust that the same may be made in perfect case in the
 regard to the conduct of my fellow countrymen, and where
 I may, in any part of this work, I can to all intents
 easily win the protection, I would be considered as ex-
 pressing a just indignation against the evils necessarily
 attending on an erroneous combination of things, rather
 than as being against the propriety of individuals.

At the same time, I turn the comparisons, that have
 been made in the present work, with strong feelings
 and though I fully agree with Mr. Haysley in his
 judgment of the comparisons of religious establishments
 in general, I can, in no means, agree to the following in-
 stance of that great man. "It is true, I think he, that
 good men should submit to the ecclesiastical powers,
 that be for conscience sake, as well as to civil ones."
 of all religious establishments and the consequences
 of human folly, and if their definition is forever
 by their practice, in the same wisdom, that permits
 them for a time, as by means, preparing the way for their
 total abolition, and further, if what makes give strength
 and perpetuity to a building, and if a separation only
 weakens and dissolves it, then, ought the language to be
 recorted by Christians; "Come on, let us among them,
 and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean
 thing."

Haysley's Observations on Man, Vol. II. p. 271.

A P P E N D I X I.

THE following short remarks are made to clear myself of a suspicion of partiality in my references to the apostolical Fathers, in what I said on the divinity of Christ. I was not ignorant, then, that in the first of these writers, Barnabas, there are many passages, which favour the pre-existence, and the divinity of Christ. But the authority of the reputed Barnabas had little weight with me, being satisfied from internal marks, as well as the testimony of Eusebius, that the Catholic Epistle, ascribed to Barnabas, could not be written by the Apostle of that name. Of this judgement were Archbishop Laud, Usher, Cotelerius,† and others, whose system this epistle favours, as well as Dr. Priestley, Mr. Wakefield, and other writers, whose system might seem to require such an expedient. And even admitting, that the epistle was written by the Apostle Barnabas, yet several of the passages brought into this controversy, to prove the divinity of Christ, have, indisputably, been interpolated,

† Testimonia de Barnaba.

terpolated, as is apparent from the Latin version. This epistle was written, most probably, in the middle of the second century. And even if the Apostle Barnabas wrote the Catholic Epistle, we have the authority of a greater Apostle for saying, Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel, let him be Anathema! Unus Paulus ante mille Patres.

WHEN I read Hermas, or Hermes, the next writer, called apostolical, I was of an opinion, that he believed the pre-existence of Christ. But I paid little regard to his authority, from a persuasion, that neither could The Shepherd be a production of an apostolical man; some parts of it being inconsistent with that purity, to be expected of such a character: which led Tertullian, and many others to reject it. Since I have read Mr. Wakefield's remarks on that passage in Hermas, which has been thought so clearly to mark out the divinity of Christ, I am convinced it is quite consistent with his mere humanity, whatever be determined of the authenticity of the writing. I shall not repeat what Mr. Wakefield has said, but refer to his performance.* I only add, that in the third book of The Shepherd, which has been thought to favour the creation of the world by Jesus Christ, creation is expressly assigned to the Father.† And where the Lord, or the Father, is said to take counsel with the Son, (that is, according to Hermas, the Spirit) and the good angels, the servant, that is Christ, is

* An Enquiry into the Opinions of the Christian Writers of the three first Centuries, concerning the Person of Jesus Christ, p. 318.

† Dominus autem fundi demonstratur esse is, qui creavit cuncta. Lib, III, Sim, v, 5.

is never mentioned. On the contrary, it is added, the holy Spirit, which was first of all infused into his body, (Christ's) in which God might dwell: for he placed understanding in him, as seemed to him good. §

I WAS clearly of opinion, when I read Clemens's admired Epistle, that there was nothing in it, which favoured the pre-existence of Christ, much less his equality with Jehova. Since what I wrote on that subject was printed off, I have read bishop Horsley's charge to his clergy, when archdeacon of St. Albans. And that writer's interpretation of the following passage, as applied to Christ, (whom he supposed the second person in the Trinity) has convinced me, I was not mistaken in my sense of the passage. Clemens speaks, as follows. "The sceptre of the Majesty of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, came not in the pomp of pride, and arrogance,|| though he had it in his power." Now to say, the supreme Being could have come in arrogance and pride, is not only gross anthromorphitism, but approaches to blasphemy. This consideration led Jerom to translate it, cum omnia possit, καὶ περ πάντα δυναμει; and one of Clemens's expositors observes, that πάντα seems to be wanted here; for if δυναμει, he had it in his power, be read alone, it should seem to imply, that he could have come in the pomp of pride, which is not true." How very true is this remark, if we imagine Christ the supreme Being! But supposing Christ to have been a mere man, (and I am clear the connection of the passage implies he was no

§ This is most probably the meaning of the passage, considered in its connection; it has evidently been corrupted, and, as it lies, is quite unintelligible.

|| Horsley's Charge, p. 15.

no more,) and every thing is natural, nor will *παντα* be wanted to make the place feasible, being exactly parallel to what is said of our Lord in the New Testament: The Sceptre of the Majesty of God being evidently an allusion to what the Apostle says, God is thy throne for ever and ever, a sceptre of righteousness is a sceptre of thy kingdom, as the latter part is to Phil. ii. 6. || When it is said of Christ, He came not in the boasting of arrogance, &c, it alludes not to a pre-existence, but to his mission, as it is said of John, He came not eating and drinking, Matth. xi. 18. Paul says of himself, And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech, or wisdom. In short, this expression occurs frequently in the New Testament, and is applied to the pretensions of true and false prophets, and teachers indifferently, in the same sense as being sent; *επιπεμτω*, is thus used by Socrates.* If Christ was a man in all things like unto us, the superior station, in which he was placed as a prophet, justifies this expression of Clemens, and many similar passages in Paul's writings, referred to Christ: for he had great temptations to vanity and pride, yet was meek and lowly of heart.

I GAVE my reasons for not quoting Ignatius in this question. Every body knows, that his Epistles have passed through the hands of roguish saints. However, they speak the language of orthodoxy; and bishop Horsley thinks that enough. He has produced a very disputed passage in Ignatius's Epistles, † in proof of the eternal existence of Christ, in the strict and absolute sense; when

* See Wakefield's Enquiry, &c. p. 198.

† *ὅς ἐστιν αὐτὸς αἰδὶς Λόγος ἐκ ἀποσιγῆς προελθὼν.*

when yet it is not sufficiently clear, that the person, against whom the passage is supposed to have been directed, lived at the time, and, indeed, by comparing the place, as it lies in the GENUINE Epistles, with the interpolated, it appears very probable, that the former was corrupted after the latter, by a mark similar to what Mr. Wakefield observed of another passage. Besides, neither does αἰδιον, any more than αἰωνιον, as applied to the Λογος by ancient writers, relate to absolute eternity, as is manifest from Philo, Eusebius, and others, who speak of the Λογος as αἰδιον, yet neither of them in the sense, for which Bishop Horsley contends. †

AFTER all, pure unadulterated scripture is the basis on which this doctrine rests, There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the MAN CHRIST JESUS.

Εἰς τὰς ἀληθείαις εἰς ἓς Θεός,
Ὁς θρανὸν τέτευχε, καὶ γαίαν μακρὰν,
Πόντον τε χαράπον, οἶδμα κ' ἀνέμων, βίαις.

SOPHOCLES.

† See this matter discussed in Mr. Whiston's Letter to the Earl of Nottingham.

APPEN-

A P P E N D I X II.

*Church Discipline. Ministers. Ordination.
Baptism. Lord's Supper. Remarks on the
Baptists, and the People, called Quakers.*

I OMITTED saying any thing on church discipline in the fourth part of this Inquiry ; to which place it properly belonged, having designed to subjoin a few separate thoughts on this subject.

CHURCH discipline is usually made to wear a solemn appearance. The primitive form of government is, sometimes, exhibited, and appeals made to greek and latin Fathers. But it would be a curious discovery to find any thing like the discipline of modern episcopacy in the early ages. The civil magistrate not being christian, till the fourth century, could not of course regulate the church, according to the claim in the 37th. article. The government of christian societies must, then, have been purely ecclesiastical.

BUT could the ecclesiastical polity of the first ages resemble our modern regimen? The present mode of
T t regulating

regulating the church, by an Archbishop over a province, and by a Bishop over a see, was certainly unknown to those times. Bishops and elders were originally one order. There was a fraternity of these in distinct societies, called the presbytery (*πρεσβυτηριον*, 1 Tim. iv. 14.) from the language of the Jews. Luk. xii. 46. Acts xxii. 5. which was usually composed of those of longest standing in the society, who would commonly be the more aged, Cyprian therefore calls them *maiores natu.*† But people of superior abilities, and high attainments in religion, were sometimes advanced to this rank, without any regard to age or standing, and yet the appellation was retained, by a similar mode of speech as that, by which we use the words senator or alderman.§ Timothy was a youth, and yet he was a presbyter or bishop, and Ignatius exhorts the Magnesians to respect their bishop, who was a youth.‡ I cannot help observing here, that the term bishop, or overseer occurs but seldom in the New Testament, and seems not to have been a distinct name of office, but expressive of the duty of an elder, which was that of overseer of the society. That bishop and elder were synonymous, may be seen by comparing Acts xx. 27. 28. and by a fair survey of the first christian writers: particularly Clemens Romanus; || Ignatius, indeed, speaks enormously of the bishop,

† Hence in Hermas, *Cum Senioribus, qui præsunt ecclesiæ.* L. I. Vis. II. Sect. IV.

§ Hooker's Eccles. Pol. B. V.

‡ Sect. III.

|| Κατα χώρας εν και πολλεις κηρυσσοντες, καθιςτανον τας αρχας αυτων δοκιμασαντες τω πνευματι. εις Επισκοπους και διακονους των μελλοντων πιστευειν. Sect. XLII. In Sect. LIV. he has, των καθεσταμενων Πρεσβυτερων.

bishop, as he does also of the presbyters, and even deacons. And many excellent writers have not scrupled to affirm, that what he says of church discipline carry the most evident marks of interpolation: and I think so too. However, after all, in Ignatius the bishop was nothing but the senior, or moderating elder. The other order was that of deacons, chosen, originally, for the temporal concerns of the church, though engaging occasionally in the ministry of the word.

CONSIDERING how rapid the growth of power is, an appeal to the fathers soon becomes of little weight. Mr. Hooker, therefore, when speaking of the three degrees of ecclesiastical order in the ANCIENTEST FATHERS, was too late in his testimony, when he quoted Tertullian, § who died A. C. 220. Nor was he accurate in saying, that bishops came in the place of the Apostles. * Ambition on the one side, and superstition on the other, soon converted a president of the elders into an aspiring character, who, by degrees, slipped into the infallible chair, and became a Pope.

I CANNOT help observing here, that as the first converts to Christianity were Jews, it was natural enough for them to introduce into their societies, the language and the practice of the synagogue. The form of church government, therefore, was probably local: and the whole controversy about the names of church officers, is scarce worth an argument. For, as they appear to have been local, there is no greater necessity for retaining the ancient names, than for wearing the same dress, as the ancient Jews, or washing the saints' feet. There may be as great

§ Tertullian de Pudicitia. * Eccles. Pol. B. v.

great a propriety in affixing some more modern appellation, and for him, who regulates the temporal affairs of a society, steward is as proper, as deacon.

WHAT we now call ORDINATION, was an ancient Jewish ceremony, the reason of which Moses hath not explained. It was, however, used on various occasions; and there seems to be nothing, but the particular pointing out the person or thing, common to all these,* which was done by the ceremony of laying on of hands. This was practiced by our Lord, as it was also by his Apostles in healing the sick, in communicating spiritual gifts, and in appointing to particular offices. In the primitive church the people always retained the right of choosing their ministers,§ which they did by lifting up the hands called χειροτονια; so that ordination was the joint act of a society choosing their own minister, and the presbytery approving and ratifying the choice. Hence χειροτονεω by the writers of the New Testament, and the first christian Fathers is applied indifferently to both.† But the church deprives its members of the right of choosing their ministers; a young minister says, he is moved by the holy Ghost; and a senior minister acts, as if he could convey it; and we call it ordination; and this is in the year 1789. The church, it is clear, supposes that some gracious influence accompanies the ceremony of imposition of hands. For, besides what I have already said, in the order of Confirmation the bishop “makes humble supplication, that those, on whom (after the manner of the

* Sykes on Sacrifices.

§ Συνευδοκησας πασης της εκκλησιας. Clemen's Ep. ad Cor. S. xliv. † Acts xiv. 23. 8. 19. Ignatii Ep. ad Smyrn. S. xi, Ad Philadelp. S. x.

the Apostles) he has laid his hands, may be certified (by this sign) of God's favour and gracious goodness towards them.

THE BAPTISM of young children is in any wise to be retained, says the 27th. article, as most agreeable to the institution of Christ.—I must confess I have not yet been able to find an example of this practice in the New Testament. When little children were brought to Christ, it is certain, that he did not baptize them; (For it is expressly said, that Jesus himself baptized not, John, iv. 2.) He put his hands on them and blessed them, and from the innocence of children, gave a useful hint to his disciples. Matth. xix. 14.* Nor have I been able to find an example of this practice, in either of the four Gospels, or in the Acts, or the Epistles, or those called apostolical Fathers. When the subjects of baptism are mentioned, they are such as could take up the christian profession, and when the mode, it appears to have been the immersion of the body, not the sprinkling of a part. The circumstance of John's going to Enon, because there was much water there, of Jesus's going down into the water, and coming up out of the water, together with the figurative allusions to the ceremony; such as being buried with him in baptism, and the like, prove that the immersion of adults was the primitive mode: and, even as late down as the apostolical Constitutions, so called, the water of Baptism is said to represent a burial; going under the water is the dying with Christ, and rising

* Παιδια, by the way, does not signify there new born babes; Suffer them, says Christ, to come to me, &c, Vid. Matth. xviii. 2, Mar. v. 39. 42.

rising out of it, a rising with him. § This is clear from the genuine signification of βαπτω and βαπτίζω (for they are synonymous) which always signify dipping in classical writers, and only washing, dying, or staining, as one implies the other, which might be abundantly shewn by innumerable authorities, from the purest classical writers, and the testimonies of the most approved critics and lexicographers. † It is also manifest from the use of this word by the septuagint, to answer the Hebrew Tabal: and accordingly, dipping ever was, and still continues to be, the mode of baptizing by the Greek church. From the New Testament, I think there is no foundation for infant baptism. Nor is there a shadow of it in the first christian writers. Thus speaks the reputed Barnabas, “We descend into the water full of sins, and filth, and rise again, bearing fruit.” || So Hermas, “They are those, who have heard the word, desiring to be baptized in the name of the Lord.” ‡ And again, “That seal is water, into which men, obnoxious to death descend,” &c. It would be endless to produce quotations on this subject. Tertullian is the first who speaks of any thing like the baptizing of young children; and yet I think it clear, that even Tertullian does not speak of new born babes, the parvuli,* whose baptism, among others, he advises to be deferred, till they grow up, and are properly

§ Lib. III, Cap. xvii.

† It is curious after what Scapula has said of βαπτω, and its derivatives, and compounds, to hear him say, αναβαπτιστης, Diabolicæ cuidam sectæ deditus. Sub voce βαπτω.

|| Epist. S. ii.

‡ L. I. Vis. iii. Sec. 7. L. III. Sim. ix. xvi.

* Tertullian, de Baptismo. p. 284. Edit. Lutet.

perly instructed, and understand christianity were indeed children, but there is no determining precisely their age, in the same manner as (*παιδια*, Matth. xix. 14.) and indeed, even the word, *Infantes*, as used by ancient writers, does not mean babes, always, but young people, minors: and it is clear that Tertullian, all along, speaks of immersion; *Homo in aqua demissus; in aquâ mergimur, &c. &c.*

SEVERAL writers well skilled in Jewish literature, among whom may be reckoned Mr. Hugh Broughton, Mr. Ainsworth, § Dr. Hammond,* Mr. Selden, Dr. Lightfoot, and others, of our own country, maintain, that the Jews received proselytes into their church by baptism, as well as by circumcision, and the children of those proselytes; and that John's baptism was derived from that source. A learned modern thinks, that,
1. Scripture baptism was performed by immersion. 2. That it was not performed upon infants. 3. That it was not intended for the children of Christian parents. †

IN opposition to the notion of proselyte baptism, two very learned writers among the baptists, Dr. Gill and Dr. Gale, have endeavoured to shew, that the practice of admitting proselytes into their church by an initiatory rite of baptism, was unknown to the ancient Jews. The former hath pursued this inquiry through the writings of the Old Testament, the Apocrypha, the New Testament, Philo, Josephus, the Targums, or Chaldee Paraphrases, the Targum of the Megillot, the Book of Jewish

§ On the Pentateuch. Gen. xvii. 12.

* Annotat. on Matt. iii. 1.

† Wakefield on Matthew, and on Baptism.

Jewish Traditions, called the Misnah, the christian Fathers of the first three or four centuries, down to the times of the Jewish Talmuds, and, he adds, upon inquiry it will be found, that the first mention of it, for aught as yet appears, is in the Jewish Talmuds.*

DR. Gale contends, that the Jews were so far from having an initiatory baptism among them before, or at, the time of Christ, that even in the Talmuds there is no agreement about it, that the baptisms spoken of in those writings, may only be the baptisms for purification; and that the Jews even ridicule the baptism of Christians, as an unmeaning ceremony. It is no where, says the author of the ancientest Nizzachon, quoted by Dr. Gale, commanded to plunge persons, or proselytes into water. Why therefore does Jesus command to do so? And again, speaking in the language of Christians, he says, that Christ came to renew the law, and that he had laid aside or abolished circumcision, and instituted baptism.† From these circumstances Dr. Gill, Dr. Gale, and the Baptists contend, that the baptism of Christians was not derived from the Jews; that it is a divine institution, that it ought not to be administered to the children of Christians; though it is of perpetual obligation on all, who take on them the christian profession.

WHATEVER were my judgement, respecting the mode, the origin, and the obligation of baptism, I must have a large portion of faith to subscribe the 25th. and 27th.

* A Dissertation concerning the Baptism of Jewish Proselytes. Cap. III.

† Reflections on Wall's History of Infant Baptism, Letters IX. X.

27th. articles. Our Reformers, it is clear, supposed, that grace accompanied baptism. "It is a sure witness and effectual sign of grace." Faith is confirmed, and grace increased, by virtue of prayer to God." But I hope it is too late in the day to suppose, that, from being children of wrath, we can, by any form of baptism, become children of grace, and members of the kingdom of heaven. †

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† This was the opinion of Austin; and even Tertulian supposed, that some extraordinary blessing attended baptism. *Hic quoque, quoniam tanta simplicitate, sine pompa, sine apparatu novo aliquo, denique sine sumptu, homo in aqua demissus, et inter pauca verba tinctus, non multo, vel nihilo melior resurgit, eo incredibilis existimetur consecutio æternitatis.* De Baptismo, p. 255. inter Opera.

I add a word on the perpetuity of baptism. The Baptists date its origin from the mission of John, and contend, that a new rite would scarcely have been instituted, that was to cease with the death of Christ, or the age of the Apostles. It cannot be denied, that the time to come, and the latter days, in the Jewish prophets, refer to the age of the Messiah. Isaiah calls Christ "the Father of the age:" by *Συντελεία τῷ αἰῶνι*, therefore many understand the end of the age, which is at Christ's second coming, or as we translate it, the end of the world. This interpretation of *αἰῶν* they think probable, from many parts of the New Testament. See Matt. xix. 39. xiii. 22. Mar. iv. 19. Where the Camb. MS. and the Latin. MSS. for *αἰῶνι* read *βίου* of life, and for *πλετε, κόσμῳ*, of the world. *Αἰὼν ἐρχομεν*, the time to come (Mar. x. 30.) is set in opposition to *οὗτῳ καιρῷ* this time. So also Luc. xvi. 8. xviii. 30. and other places. *Συντελεία τῷ αἰῶνι* only occurs in Matt. xiii. 39. 40—49—xxiv. 3. 28. 20; and a similar place in the epistle to the Hebrews, ix. 26. *συντελεία τῶν αἰώνων*, the end of the ages. The Camb. MS. for *Αἰῶνι*, Mat. xiii. 49. reads *κόσμου*, of the world. Other commentators by *συντελεία τῷ αἰῶνι* understand the end of the Jewish age,

THE rite, now called the LORD'S SUPPER, received its origin from the last passover-supper, which our Lord

eat
or œconomy, which they date at the destruction of Jerusalem. But an ingenious person hath undertaken to shew, that the Jews' religion never was abrogated, or designed to be. On the contrary, that Christ and his apostles conformed to it; that the jewish Christians strictly adhered to it, at, and after the destruction of the temple; that it was the uniform testimony of the prophets, and the general belief of the jewish nation, that their ritual was of perpetual obligation; that the Jews are still bound by their religion, and will continue in the practice of it, at their future restoration. See the Theological Repository, Vol. V. VI. On the Perpetuity of the jewish ritual. In the first christian writers *συντελεία τῶν αἰώνων*, and *τῶν αἰώνων* mean the end of time, as well as *Consummatio sæculi*.|| Thus also Socinus, who rejected water baptism. *Consummatio sæculi, cum ipse veniet, nos e terra pulveribus excitaturus. De Cœna Dom.* When, therefore, Christ gave the commission to his apostles they contend, with great appearance of probability, that success should attend their doctrine till the end of time. Again, it seems probable, that all who professed christianity in the apostolic age were baptized. Paul, indeed, thanked God, that he baptized none of the Corinthians, but Crispus and Gaius, and the house of Stephanas. The people, however, had been baptized. 1 Cor. i. 13. And as the churches, planted by the apostles, are addressed, as baptized, and yet were not all baptized by them, baptism must have been administered by their direction. In the scriptures, there is no intimation, that baptism was to cease. Nor is there one word in the apostolical fathers to invalidate it. Irenæus speaks of the Gnostics as rejecting "the baptism of the appearing Jesus for the remission of sins;" L. I. C. xxi. § 3. 4. but these heretics had a baptism expressive of their own sentiments. Indeed Justin Martyr speaks against the washings, and other ritual performances, of the Jews, and in favour of a figurative baptism, p. 228, &c. Opera: yet he believed the baptism of

|| Bishop Pearce distinguishes these expressions, the latter he refers to the last of the three jewish ages; the latter to the end of the last age, the end of the world, in 1 Cor, x. 2.

eat with his disciples: at which time, agreeably to the custom of the Jews, at their ordinary meals, he took bread

of Christians. Ου ταυτην, says he, την κατα σαρκα παρελαβόμεν περιτομην, αλλα, πνευματικην, ην Ενωχ και οι ομοιοι εφυλαξαν. Ημεεις δε δια τη Βαπτισματ^{ος} αυτην, επειδη αμαρτωλοι εγεγονειμεν, δια το ελε^{ος}, το παρα τη θε^ω, ελαβόμεν, και ΠΑΣΙΝ ΕΦΕΤΟΝ ΟΜΟΙΩΣ ΛΑΜΒΑΝΕΙΝ.

On the other hand, the perpetuity of baptism is liable to objections, independent of the question, relative to the Jewish proselyte baptism, stated by the excellent Mr. Emlyn, and a different interpretation of συντελεια αιων^{ος}, which many learned commentators, and critics make to refer to the destruction of Jerusalem; many other parts of the New Testament, usually referred to the end of the world, they apply to the same period. Though I own, I do not think the perpetuity or non-perpetuity of baptism depend essentially on the meaning of this expression. For if we translate it the end of the world, it would not necessarily follow, that water baptism was therefore to be perpetuated; and if we translate it the end of the Jewish age, when miraculous powers ceased, it would not necessarily follow, that therefore water baptism was to cease. But yet, I say, the perpetuity of it is liable to objection. Should it be granted Dr. Gill, and Dr. Gale, that the ancient Jews had not a proper initiatory baptism, for their proselytes; they certainly had their washings for legal uncleannesses and solemn appearances before God. And particularly after the uncleanness of circumcision. It might therefore, still be asked, whether the baptism of John might not suit that period, though it ceased with the times of the Apostles; whether it is probable, that Christ, who says, My yoke is easy, would charge his religion with a ceremony in some cases and climates so hazardous, and so trying particularly to female delicacy; whether a commission to the Apostles, who were extraordinarily gifted, gives a sanction to their uninspired successors; whether a command to the Apostles to baptize, as Socinus objects, in connection with teaching, involves a command, that those should be baptized, who have not been taught by the Apostles; and who it may be asked, has now an authority to baptize with water? Further, it has been asked, whether Christ's command to baptize into the

bread and blessed, or gave thanks, and afterwards, gave thanks for the wine. At the passover supper, it was usual

name, or profession of the Father, of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, relates to water? It cannot be denied that baptize and baptism are sometimes used figuratively. Mar. xii. 50. Luk. iii. 3. 1 Pet. iii. 21, &c. Though some of the passages produced by Socinus and Barclay, need not be so interpreted, particularly Acts xix. 3. brought by Socinus, (which is but a Hebrew form of speech, common also to classical writers, to which 1 Tim. vi. 13. is parallel;) and Rom. vi. 3. 4. Gal. iii. 27. brought by Mr. Barclay. I do not admit the latter writer's interpretation of Matth. xxviii. 29. Though I do not deny with Dr. Gill and others, that the Apostles could baptize with the holy Spirit: for they could communicate miraculous powers, which is baptizing with the holy Spirit. Socinus refers this passage to the doctrine, into which the Apostles instructed their disciples. An argument in favour of this sense, is, that the Apostles never baptized in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, but into the name of Jesus, continuing a practice, to which they had been accustomed before. In the parallel passage, Luke xxiv. 47, baptizing is not mentioned, but repentance, and remission of sins. Again: It is not certain, that all believers were baptized in the time of Christ: we have no account of the baptism of the Apostles, except Paul; though, as they baptized themselves, and many of them, we know, had been the disciples of John, it is probable, they had all been baptized by him. Tertull. de Bapt. It is not certain, that the good profession, which Timothy professed before many witnesses, 1 Tim. vi. 12. relates to baptism; for Paul says the same of Christ, professing before Pilate, Ver. 13. Though I think it, most probably, does, for the *ομολογια*, among the early Christians, stood for the profession at baptism. In the primitive church, too, there would be, at least, among those, whom they called audientes, the hearers, many who either from conviction, or other motives, were not baptized, and yet were sincere Christians. Irenæus observes of the Gnostics, "And they say, that Paul hath expressly shewn in many places, that redemption, which is in

usual for the master of the house to break the bread into morsels, and to deliver it to the guests, in commemoration

in Christ; and that it is the same, as that delivered by them with some variety, and disagreement. *Contra Hæres. L. I. C. xxi. § 3.* Hence I infer some, might reject baptism, without receiving all the gnostic heresy. Irenæus often reckons among heretics, those, who were not so, particularly the Ebionites, *L. III. C. xxx. 31.* It has been disputed whether the Caians, rejected baptism; but Quintilla, the quædam de Caiana hæresi vipera, and her followers, certainly did. Tertullian speaks of her as destroying baptism, destruens baptismum, and taking away baptism, auferebat baptismum, p. 255. 265. opera. After having quoted this text, "thy faith hath made thee whole:" he makes her followers reply, "Therefore baptism is not necessary, for whom faith is sufficient. For Abraham also pleased God by a sacrament of no other water, than that of faith. He also states other objections, and replies to them. The Manichees rejected baptism. "They maintain, says Austin, who had been one of them, that baptism in water does no body any good: neither do they baptize any of the profelytes whom they delude into their sect." *De Haer. C. xlvii.* And after all the reproach brought against this sect, they were many of them very respectable Christians. Mr. Wall, (*Hist. of Inf. Bapt. L. II. C. v. vii.*) gives an account, from authentic testimonies, of several sects, who rejected baptism: such as the Messalians, the Alcrodyti, and Archontici; and at the time of the Waldenses, the Lyonists, the Runcarians, the Siscidenfes, the Ortlibenses, the Paterins, the Ordibarians, and the Cathari, or Puritans. So that the opinion of Socinus, and Mr. Rob. Barclay is no such novel one: though Socinus has not availed himself of this argument: and the examples produced by Mr. Barclay, are from Alanus, and Pitheus, and another as low as the 11th. century, though he just hints at the Manichees.

Insignificant as this pen is, it would not bear wilful testimony to an error, nor, on the other hand, make light of what appeared, a christian institute, for the universe. I have paused again, and again on this subject, and impartially weighed the probabilities on both sides. The Baptists, have

tion of the deliverance of the Jews out of Egypt, saying, "this is the bread of affliction, which you fathers eat in Egypt."|| In allusion to this custom, our Lord said; This do in remembrance of me, and in distinction from the body of the passover," as the lamb was called, said, take eat, this is my body.* At the solemn treaties of the Jews, it was usual to slay a victim: hence the old covenant was ratified with the blood of beasts, which was therefore called "the blood of the covenant." Ex. xxiv. 8. In allusion to this, our Lord after supper took the cup, saying, This cup is the New Testament by my blood. This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. And Paul adds, as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death, till he come.

WHEN the first christians broke bread together, it is clear to me, it was a real, though a temperate meal. The Corinthians could never have abused the present
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have certainly very considerable evidence on their side of the question. Every impartial, and sincere inquirer, whether he take his stand in the scriptures, or primitive antiquity, must, I think, acknowledge this. And the history of this people, when brought to light by the ingenious Mr. Robinson, must, be deeply interesting and important. At the same time, it appears to me, that some of the most eminent baptist and pedit-baptist writers, have not sufficiently answered the difficulties, which relate to the perpetuity of baptism. Dr. Gill (at least, in what I have read of his Body of Divin. Vol. III. B. i. C. i.) hath not gone to the bottom of them; Dr. Gale hath not touched them, p. 381. nor hath the famous pedit-baptist, Mr. Wall. He that baptizeth children, from conscience, to the Lord he baptizeth them, and giveth God thanks; he that baptizeth adults, to the Lord he baptizeth them, and giveth God thanks; he that refuseth to be baptized, from conscience, to the Lord he refuseth, and giveth God thanks. See Socius De Bapt. C. xvii.

|| Abauzit on the Eucharist. * Dr. Gill on 1 Cor. ii.

rite to purposes of intemperance. For this reason I think it far more proper to call it, as the primitive Christians commonly did, the Eucharist, or Agape, the love feast. Whether however the rite was altogether local, or designed to accompany the different changes of the church, I will not positively determine. Some Christians make it subservient to very pious and benevolent purposes, others unite very well without it. The first Christian writers speak of it as practiced in their time, particularly Ignatius: who tells us, that the Docetæ, who asserted, that Christ had not a real, but a phantastic body, rejected therefore the Eucharist,* though it appears from Irenæus† and Epiphanius,§ that these heretics substituted a false one in its room. Several of those sects of true Christians, who rejected baptism, rejected also the Lord's supper. So also did the Paulicians. Many have thought, the two rites not necessarily connected; Socinus rejected baptism, but retained the Eucharist. Some think, they both stand or fall together. The Quakers, accordingly, reject both. But admitting the perpetuity of this rite, and acknowledging the propriety of calling it the Lord's supper, the church of England gives it a solemnity, and mysteriousness, which I cannot quite comprehend. Is it not strange, too, to see people all on their knees at supper? Should it not be taken according to the manner, in which different nations are accustomed to take their food? Whence did the contrary practice originate? From the romish church. They suppose, that Jesus Christ is the supreme God, and that
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* Epist. ad Smyrn. S. vii.

† Cont. Haeres. L. iv. C. xviii.

§ Haer. xvi, N. iv. 7. 8. 9. 11. 15. 16. 38. N. v.

the words of the priest convert bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. Hence the custom of kneeling, the posture of adoration, on taking the sacred wafer. The church of England also believes, that Christ is very God, and that the body and blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken in the Lord's Supper. On taking, therefore, the consecrated bread, we kneel, the posture of adoration. This in the year 1789!†

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‡ With respect to the perpetuity of this rite, that Matthew, Mark, and Luke, in their accounts of the passover, are very circumstantial, is certain. I admit with Mr. Barclay, that such expressions of our Lord's, as, the Father giveth the true bread from heaven; I am the bread from heaven; I am the living bread, which came down from heaven; my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed, have no reference whatever to this rite, (Apol. Prop. xiii.) but are applied, figuratively, to his doctrine; and, the expression, this is my body, has also something figurative in it, yet the rite itself is actual and external. I think it also incontestible, that the first Christians commemorated the death of Christ, and I think it equally certain, that the bread, and the cup (1 Cor. x. 16.) do not relate to spiritual food and wine, as Mr. Barclay understands them, but to outward elements, by which the first Christians commemorated the death of Christ, and by which they professed themselves "one body and one bread." Nor could the Apostle, by the Lord's coming, understand "his inward coming and appearance." Apol. p. 463. 5th. Edit.

It may be further observed, when our Lord says, this do in remembrance of me (εις την εμην αναμνησιν) and Paul, ye do shew forth the Lord's death, the only object in contemplation was the death of Christ. These expressions allude to the Jewish sacrifices, in which there was a remembrance made of sins every year, Heb. x. 3. The word αναμνησις (remembrance) only occurs in the Evangelist's account of the paschal supper, (Luke xxii. 19.) in Paul's account of the same solemnity, and in the passage of the Ep. to the Hebrews, already quoted. All that can be said, then, on this subject, is contained in this passage of Luke;

To speak my mind freely, though I differ materially from Hooker in his judgement of the doctrine and discipline

Luke; This is my body, the true sacrifice, which was given for you; this do in remembrance of me: and in what the Apostle says, as oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew, (some read it, shew, which sense the word will bear) the Lord's death, till he come. See Soci-nus de Caena Dom.

But though some of Mr. Barclay's explanations of scripture cannot be admitted, the perpetuity of the Lord's Supper, is still liable to some objections. It is a lamentable truth, though I confess no argument, "that there have been more animosities and heats about this one particular, and more bloodshed and contention, than about any other." Barclay's Apol. p. 456. For Christianity itself hath been perverted to the purposes of priestcraft and superstition, of ministerial pride, and a most unrighteous oppression. But, it may still be asked, whether it be agreeable to the genius of Christianity, to introduce a new rite, as some say, the Eucharist is? If it be said the Eucharist is no new rite, but consecrated to a new purpose, it may be asked, whether it is probable, that a local peculiarity would be entailed and perpetuated on an universal religion? Besides, it cannot, I think, be fairly denied, that the breaking of bread, so often mentioned in the New Testament was expressive of an ordinary repast: compare our Lord's miracles, recorded in Matth. xiv. xx.—15. Mar. vi.—8. Luc ix.—John vi. Luc. x. xiv. 35 where he breaks bread with his disciples after his resurrection. Acts ii. 42. where the disciples are described as having all things in common, &c. This is also clear, from what is said of the disciples coming together at Troas to break bread: Acts xx, where it is clear, as Mr. Barclay justly observes, it was a supper; the 11th. verse places it, I think, beyond dispute: When he, therefore, was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed. Acts xxvii. 35. And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God (as our Lord at the passover,) in the presence of them all; and when he had broken it, he began to eat; then they were all of good cheer, and took refreshment, or nourishment

cipline of the church of England, I am not sure, that some respect is not due to one leading principle in the
second

τεροφης. And when they had EATEN ENOUGH they lightened the ship, &c.

But, if the coming of Christ so frequently mentioned in the gospel, Compare Matth. xvi.—xxvii. Matt. xxiv. Mar. xiii. Luke xxi. Jo. xxi. 22. 23. relate to the destruction of Jerusalem, which is the judgement of some very judicious commentators, and critics: * and if various parts of the epistles relate to the same event. 2 Thess. ii. 1. 8. Ja. v. 8, 9.—2 Pet. i. 15, &c. It may appear to some, that the perpetuity of the Lord's supper, so far as relates to its absolute obligation, may be affected by it. Putting Christ to death, was the last stage of national depravity, by which the Jews filled up the measure of their wickedness, and hastened the destruction of their city and temple; a destruction more complete, than all the annals of human misery can shew, or ever will. Our Lord, therefore, it hath been said, foretold its destruction in the strong, figurative language of the ancient prophets; compare Is. xiii. 10. Ez. xxxii. 7. Joel ii, with Matt. xxiv. Christians were in possession of the signs, which preceded it, so as to escape the ruin, which involved their unhappy countrymen. It is then natural to suppose, that it would make part of their private conversation, and be frequently alluded to in the epistles to the churches. And, if the coming in the Gospels relate wholly to the destruction of Jerusalem, || the expression in the Corinthians may so too. Nor need we wonder that the writers of the epistles should speak in such cautious language, (well enough understood by the christians;) for by speaking out they might have exposed themselves, still more, to the resentment of the persecuting Jews.

If it be asked, what relation the destruction of Jerusalem had to the Christians at Corinth? It may be replied, exactly the same, as it had to those at Thessalonica; for if it be sufficient to say, that the Jews had a synagogue at Thessalonica; and though they were distant from Jerusalem, yet that by going there at the great festival they would be involved

* Pearce, Hammond, Grotius, Harwood, Wakefield, &c.

|| Grotius and Dr. Hammond suppose there were three comings of Christ. See further, Hurd on Prophecy. Vol. II.

second and third books of Ecclesiastical Polity. For I never expect to see it proved, that "Scripture is the only rule of all things, to be done in this world," or "that there is a form of government laid down in the New Testament, from whose laws there may be no variation." I have, therefore, made no particular remarks for or against a Liturgy; it being my judgement, that the regulation of worship is left to the discretion of every particular society. I believe no sect will be found in England, whose discipline is exactly that of the times of the Apostles. Great Britain hath been called the "land of sects:" religious inquiry hath had full exercise here, and in consequence of free investigation, there hath been a beautiful variety of religious denominations. But, now, I would

involved in the misery of their countrymen, and the Christians be delivered from their persecutions: all this will apply exactly to the Corinthians: the Jews had a synagogue also at Corinth Acts xviii. and were also fore persecutors of the Christians. Paul's expression, therefore, of shewing forth the Lord's death till he come, may have, on these principles, a local reference. He says, 1 Cor. 11. with all, that in EVERY place are called by the name of Jesus Christ; but the epistle is addressed to the church at Corinth, a city of Achaia; every where therefore only means, every where in the regions of Achaia, as bishop Pearce hath justly remarked, in loco.

But if the coming of Christ be interpreted in connection with the scheme proposed by Anglo Scotus in the Theological Repository,* every thing here objected will pass for nothing. For, I confess, if that writer can establish his system, an unanswerable argument will be formed in favour of the perpetuity of the Eucharist, so far as an Apostle's opinion may be received as divine authority.†

* Theol. Rep. Vol. VI.

† ΤΟΥΤΟ ΠΟΙΕΙΤΕ ΕΙΣ ΤΗΝ ΕΜΗΝ ΑΝΑΜΝΗΣΙΝ, do this in remembrance of me, is not in the Cam. MS. or the Lat. MSS; though it is quoted by Justin Martyr (Apol. 2.) from Luke.

would ask, amidst all this happy freedom, and this beautiful variety, Whence hath it happened, that no one sect hath yet arisen, whose external discipline hath been exactly formed after the primitive model? The sacred scriptures have been in every body's hands; church discipline hath been thoroughly investigated; reformation and re-reformation have been all the cry; and many leaders of the different denominations have shouted, *Ευηκαμεν, Ευηκαμεν*. It would, however, be no difficult matter to shew, that there is no one society in England or Scotland, whose discipline is exactly regulated after the primitive standard.* Whence hath this happened? The proper answer is this. Some part of the primitive discipline was peculiar to inspired men, but belongs not to their uninspired successors; and some part was proper for a particular period, and particular countries, but was not laid down as obligatory on all. The primitive church discipline, then, is past and gone, was useful for the time, but cannot be recovered. Many upright men have laboured to revive it. But, without questioning their sincerity, or undervaluing their labours, I venture to affirm, they have not attained it; and, further still, till they are precisely in the case of the primitive church, they cannot attain it. No sect have made higher pretensions to have found the primitive discipline, than the followers of Mr. Glasie of Scotland, † on whose principles several societies were formed in Scotland; and Mr. Sandiman formed one or two in England. I own, I cannot sufficiently admire the fraternal manner, by which they regulate their worship. But their peculiar discipline is derived from jewish observances, and local peculiarities; such

* The truth is, different countries had different rules.

† See Glasie's Works passim.

such as, their abstaining from blood and things strangled, their giving the kiss of charity, and washing the saints feet. Their interpretation of the christian doctrine is, I think, extremely erroneous; and the basis, on which they erect the "love of the brethren," narrow beyond all parallel. || The amiable people, called Quakers, too, are by no means formed after the primitive model. It is on a conviction of the indeterminateness of church discipline so called, I suspect, that an excellent and judicious person,† who hath very honourably laboured to recover the just notion of the OBJECT of christian worship, hath acted at the chapel in Essex Street. Irreconcilable, however, as I am to all institutions, that are in alliance with the civil magistrate, and receive their discipline from his hands, but full of respect for every FREE christian society in "this land of sects," most affectionately do I pray the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, that peace and prosperity may be within their dwellings!

THIS is all digression. But I cannot pass on, without stopping to admire the simple manners, and serious deportment of the peaceful FRIENDS. Ye admirers of the illustrious William Penn, receive this tribute of esteem from an impartial stranger! Ye have long given instruction to Christians: and may ye still continue witnesses against the ravages and disorders of society! Above all the sects in Christendom, ye have testified against an antichristian priesthood, and the unrighteous imposition of tithes.* The FRIENDS ask (and with justice) why should
christian

|| Jb. On Receiving the Lord's Supper with Unworthy Communicants, in Testimony of the King of Martyrs.

† Mr. Lindsey * See Pearson on Tithes.

christian states reckon their days and months after heathen deities?—If the Reformers and legislators of christendom had rectified their calendar, instead of ALTERING the christian doctrines, they had kept within their own province. The Friends have certainly reformed many things, which the governments of christendom have never touched.

THE Quakers, like the disciples of Confucius, have no priests: or more properly speaking, they are among themselves “a kingdom of priests.” Even the women are permitted to teach in their public assemblies, in common with the men.—The sword is with them an unrighteous weapon. And I rise up with respect to the children of peace. When the SON of MAN shall sit on the throne of his father David, peace shall be established on the earth.—Like the ancient Phrygians, the Friends neither swear themselves, nor impose an oath on others. And, truly, at a time, when the means of evading oaths are as numerous, as the reasons for multiplying them, the practice of this people, whose honest affirmation supercedes the necessity of an oath, is entitled to the attention of the legislature.

QUAKERISM considered as a scheme of civil polity hath its excellencies. It hath also its excellencies, as a scheme of christian discipline. But excellent as the discipline is in some points of view, it hath been thought defective in others: and admirably fitted as it is to one particular scheme of religion, it hath been thought by no means fitted for the general reception of Christians.

IN

IN opposition to FEMALE teaching, some critics have said, that praying and prophecyng 1 Cor. xi. 5. relate to joining in singing and prayer. But this I think not sufficiently clear. It is well known that propheciug both in sacred and profane writers means teaching; † and Locke, Poole and Bishop Pearce have admitted, that after the day of pentecost, and during the continuance of miraculous powers, women might prophecy, that is teach, while under a divine impulse. Bishop Pearce reconciles 1 Cor. xi. 5. with xiv. 34, 35. and 1 Tim. ii. 12. 13. by supposing that the former text relates to women under a divine impulse, the latter to those who were ordinarily gifted. But neither am I satisfied with this account. For it does not appear, that the women even when under a divine impulse taught in the church, that is, an assembly composed of men and women. Paul says, let your women keep silence in the church; for it is not permitted unto them to speak: as also saith the law, 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35. which certainly refers to public speaking: as he had said before in another case: If there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church, v. 28. V. 35. perhaps relates to the custom in the primitive church of stopping the speaker, and asking him to explain himself. But even this was not allowed the women. Let them ask their husbands at home, says Paul. I, therefore, think with Dr. Taylor, that 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35. relates to the church, where men and women were assembled promiscuously; and xi. 5, to societies wholly composed of females, agreeable to the manners of the Grecians; where the females had their separate apartments,

† Gen. xx. 7. Ex. iv. 16. Pro. xxx. i. 31. 1, &c. Diod. Sic. Aristotle, Plato, Josephus. Pearce's Comment. Acts xv. 32.

apartments, (called *γυναικωρίς*.) Potter's Grecian Antiq. Vol. II. xiii. Is it then unlawful for a female to teach in a public assembly, agreeable to the practice of the Quakers? I have not said so. But the proper answer to this question, I conceive is, not that, which Mr. Pen and Mr. Barclay give, but this, that the mode of regulating christian worship is wholly discretionary. Paul, indeed, said; we have no such custom. But (except it can be shewn, that Paul's rules for regulating worship are binding on all ages) the Quakers are at liberty, I conceive, to say, What then? We have. The mode of ordering churches in the times of the apostolical Fathers was by a bishop, that is the senior presbyter, presbyters and deacons. Presbyteresses, in Greece, were wives of the presbyters, as the deaconesses were of the deacons, or else women professedly set apart for the service of the church. And Grotius hath observed they were ordained till the council of Laodicea, by the imposition of hands, and that they instructed the females: but they were not PUBLIC teachers. Taylor and Grotius, on Rom. xvi.

WHETHER it be lawful for a christian to take an OATH when offered by the magistrate hath been much disputed. The best thing, that the wisest men can say for oaths is, that they are evils, which the depravity of mankind render necessary. But they are not necessary for a good man. He loves truth, and his solemn asseverations will have the force of oaths. Neither are they the cords, which bind a bad man. In both cases, perhaps, a solemn asseveration before the civil magistrate, with a severe fine, or corporal punishment, in case of a violation, would better answer every purpose of civil society. I am not
sure

sure that the depravity of mankind, which may seem to render oaths necessary, may not furnish an argument against the use of them.

THE apostolical Fathers, so called, say nothing either for or against oaths. Polycarp is referred to by Mr. Barclay,* as against them. He alludes, I suppose, to his martyrdom: (for, in his epistle to the Philippians, there is nothing about them,) at which time he was called on to swear by the genius of Cæsar. He replied, if you vainly suppose, that I will swear by the fortune of Cæsar, as you speak, you affect not to know, who I am. Freely hear me, I am a christian: † the usual reply of the primitive christians, when called upon to swear by the Genius or fortune of the Emperor. Which applies not to the present times; when the magistrate acknowledges Jehovah, the God of christians. Nor does Justin Martyr's application of Matt. v. 34. 37. || For he, clearly, refers it to speaking truth: as Mr. Wakefield hath before observed. § Περὶ τοῦ μὴ ὀμνῆσαι ὀλως, τ' ἀληθῆν δὲ λέγειν αἰ. &c. These writers are also referred to by Mr. Pen. ‡ I think it, however, probable, that most, if not all the primitive christians, for nearly the three first centuries supposed all oaths unlawful. Their testimonies are referred to by Barclay, and stated at large by his fellow labourer. "The ancient christians and Fathers, says bishop Gauden, (quoted by Pen) that they might not be short of the Esseni,** who would not take an oath, refused

* Apol. prop. xv.

† Epist. Circul. de Polycarpi Mart. S. x,

|| Apol. ii. p. 63. Ed. Lutet.

§ On Matt. v.

‡ Treatise on Oaths. Vol. II. Select Woks.

** On their admission into the society, however, the Esseni were sworn. See Bishop Pearce on Matt. v.

fulled to swear, saying to the heathens, Christianus sum, I am a Christian; and to each other, yea, yea; nay, nay; thereby keeping up the sanctity and purity of their profession."

THE amount of this evidence, then, is, that while the magistrate was pagan, the primitive christians refused court oaths; and that it was their opinion, all swearing was unlawful for a Christian. How far their situation in regard to a pagan magistrate resembles ours, and how far their opinion is to be received as the sense of scripture, may, perhaps deserve consideration.

OUR Lord, indeed says, swear not all. But the sermon on the mount is clearly to be interpreted with some degree of limitation, and in reference to the customs of the Jews. For example. Our Lord says, whosoever shall say to his brother, Racha, deserves to fall under the judgement of the council, or Sanhedrim, but whosoever shall say, thou fool, deserves Hell fire, that is to be burnt in the valley of Hinnom. Yet Jam. ii. 20. says, O vain man, that is Racha. And our Lord, thou fool Lu. xii. 20. and 24. 25. O foolish and slow of heart. Christ must, therefore, refer to words, flowing from an evil, censorious, and malicious spirit. But, it will not follow, that people in authority may not utter very sharp reproofs; or that equals may not censure their neighbours, so as to enforce a conviction of wickedness and folly, not suffering sin on them. Mr. Wakefield interprets swear not, (ΕΙΣ ΤΟ ΕΠΙΟΡΚΕΙΝ) with a view to forswear. And, indeed, it may be justly argued that Christ is here speaking of voluntary, or promissory oaths, or vows, by which the Jews devoted any thing to Jehovah, but avoided

avoided uttering his name; using some inferior form of words, to evade the force of the obligation. But our Lord says, let your communication, your word, (*Λογος*) yea, be yea; your word, nay, be nay, (so it should be translated,) that is, let your performances correspond with your promises. However, I am not sure, that any **EXAMPLE** can be produced, from the New Testament, sufficiently decisive, to set aside the interpretation of the Quakers, Swear not **AT ALL**. The solemn declarations of Paul amount not to an oath, administered by a magistrate *ex officio*. And though our Lord when adjured by the living God, by the high priest, replied directly, Thou hast said; or as Mark has it, I am; it may be doubted, whether this was the form of administering an oath among the Jews, though it was by the Grecians. †

No man is worthy to be a member of a christian society, whose affirmation would not bind like an oath. And though I am not sufficiently convinced, that all oaths are absolutely unlawful, yet devoutly do I wish, that every Christian society in England, (in the primitive church, the Eucharist was a kind of sacrament or oath,) might receive the same indulgence as the Quaker. Every communicant should be allowed this privilege. In the Exceptions, or select Collections of Egbert, Archbishop of York, it was appointed, "that no Priest whatsoever, may swear an oath:" and about the year 750, at the council of Berghamsted, "that a bishop's, or a king's word, or affirmation, without an Oath, is irrefragable;" and to this day, in Germany, the Electoral Archbishops of Cologne, Mentz, and Friers, and many Noblemen, in their

† Leigh's Crit. Sacra. Sub voce *ἐξορκισμός*.

their station, speak without an Oath, upon their Honour," &c. ||

THE question, which relates to WAR, must be ascertained on similar principles. Private redress for small injuries are, certainly, forbidden the Christian; he should rather suffer the wrong, than avenge himself. But will this, it may be asked, supersede the protection of the christian magistrate, or a legal redress of wrongs? To propagate christianity by the sword, or to engage in offensive WAR, are unlawful for christian states. But it may be asked, may they not defend their civil and religious rights, and oppose the assaults of an enemy? By admitting the contrary principle, do we not leave the possessions of the virtuous, a prey to the wicked? Do we not incapacitate the christian magistrate from protecting the subject? Is not protection of innocence as much his duty, as punishment of vice? And can the magistrate protect, without the subject's assistance? If all war be unlawful, from Matt. v. Will not going to law be liable to the same prohibition? To speak, however, sincerely, I feel great reverence for a sect, that bear testimony against the ravages of society. And such a society as the Quakers are not only entitled to toleration from christian states, but all the encouragement and support, which a legislature can give them.

WITH all my esteem for this people, I will add, if the scheme of doctrine laid down in the fourth part of this Inquiry, be true, that of Mr. Pen and Mr. Barclay, is in many respects wrong. They have sufficiently cleared themselves

themselves of the charge of believing the obnoxious doctrine of Socinus, in their writings. And though in opposing the claims of the magistrate over conscience no writer exceeds Mr. Barclay, yet he maintained, "That it was lawful for a christian church, if she find any of her members to fall into ANY ERROR, to cut them off from her fellowship, "by the sword of the spirit." Accordingly, the system of the Quakers doth not leave room for religious liberty, within the society.

By the rules of this society, nothing can be published by their ministers, till after examination, and with the sanction of the society; a provision, to prevent schisms. But, doth it not, also, restrain the mental powers, and the pursuits of sacred literature?

I AM an INQUIRER, not a Reformer. And in an affair, which appears to me discretionary, let me be allowed to indulge my fancy. I have supposed a society might be formed, admitting,

I. AN uninterrupted liberty of sentiment. There should be no PUBLIC creed, but the scriptures, and no individuals, nor the society at large should interpret them for others, but each individual should interpret them for himself. The truth is, by the constitution of nature, man is free. And natural religion is a stranger to every force, but that of evidence. Revealed religion, too, offers no other compulsion. Jesus is silent respecting any person, whom he empowers to deprive me of religious liberty, and not only so, but gives a positive command to his disciples, to call no man master upon earth. A christian

tian society, therefore, should enjoy an uninterrupted liberty of sentiment. I know of only one exception, which regards the OBJECT of worship. For how one, who believes Jehovah alone should receive divine worship, and that Christ is only a MAN, can unite in praise and prayer with one, who worships Christ as God, is what I cannot easily understand.

2. THIS society might also allow liberty of practice. I speak not of moral actions. But I mean, that no ceremony whatever should be the necessary bond of union: and for this reason, because no ceremony whatever is an essential part, at least, of Christianity. Here, then, Christ's conduct, in suiting himself to the times, and circumstances of his disciples, and this fine social principle, laid down by Paul, Serve one another in love, give a beautiful model to those, who would walk in the house of God as friends. For example. Some Christians (for this society is a christian community, not an ecclesiastical corporation) believe, that the children of believers should have baptism administered to them, as the children of Jews, had circumcision. Others that believers only should be baptized. They think, that sprinkling is not baptism. But that baptism, is still obligatory. And others set aside every form of water baptism. Yet why might they not all eat of one bread and drink of one cup?† Nay, some Christians wholly reject the Eucharist.

† The Eucharist, I am informed, is received by a society at Dundee in a more social manner, than among us. They have no regular administrator, and admit conversation on religious subjects at the table.

I should have observed p. 347, notes, that the scheme proposed by Anglo Scotus in the Theological Repository supposes,

Eucharist. But, still, Christians thus widely differing in judgement, might form one society, and partake it's common privileges.

THIS is maintained in reference to the conduct of Christ and his Apostles, suiting themselves to the times and circumstances of their brethren, and to the SOCIAL PRINCIPLE, which was a guide to the first churches. Nor is this mere speculation: the decrees, as they have been called, which the church at Jerusalem formed to compose differences, and which advise the Christians at Antioch to abstain from blood and things strangled,

(which supposes, that there were two questions put by the disciples to our Lord: When shall these things be, And what shall be the sign of thy COMING? According to him, therefore, the coming of Christ always means the glorious appearance of Christ to reign on this earth. Dr. Taylor, in his paraphrase on the Romans, supposes, that day, the end of all things. The appearance, and the coming of Christ, &c. so frequently mentioned in the Epistles, coincide with a person's death, and with him Mr. Wakefield agrees. (on Matth. xxiv.) though he doth not admit, that two questions were put to our Lord. The latter writer supposes, that from speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem, our Lord passes (from V. 41.) to that more general event, that was to take place among mankind. That many of the passages, at least, produced by Dr. Taylor, relate to death, is I think unquestionable. For, it should be observed, that Christians are never exhorted to prepare for DEATH.—Either of these schemes affords a presumption in favour of the Eucharist. And not to insist that Christ absolutely appointed it, in some societies, no provision can have more benevolent tendencies. Nor do I think it necessary to be convinced of it's absolute obligation to receive it, in remembrance of Christ, and in token of union with a Christian society. Eating and drinking together, both among the ancient Jews and Gentiles, was not only a symbol of making a covenant with their deities, but of friendship among men. I do not say, Christ hath NOT made it obligatory.

(which restraints are called necessary) seem to me made on these principles; such rules being necessary for the church at that time, to remove each other's prejudices, and to conciliate each other's affection. These benevolent exhortations, too, of the Apostle, go on the same principle, he that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord, and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it.

3. THE society might allow liberty of speech. When Christ first began his ministry, he chose twelve Apostles. But he appointed no masters; for there was nothing to govern: no priests, for there was no sacrifice.—On the day of Pentecost the BRETHREN were inspired,† and Jews assembled from all parts of the Roman empire, heard EVERY man in his own language.* After the persecution at Jerusalem, all except the Apostles, were dispersed, and proclaimed the word.‡ And during the continuance of miraculous powers, all might teach. At first the Apostles, so to speak, were both elders and deacons. Indeed, the word deacon, or minister (διακονῶν) was applied both to the ministry of tables, and of the word.† Afterwards, some ministers or deacons were appointed for secular affairs, and others for religious instruction. Perhaps, (for this I take to be discretionary) considering, that the scriptures were written in a foreign language, at a distant period of the world, and by people of different manners and customs from our own: considering too, that the enemies of our religion avail themselves of an-
cient

† Acts i. ii.

* Ch. ii. 8.

‡ Ch. viii. 14. 1 Cor. xiv.

† Ch. vi. 2, 4.—xx. 24.

cient and modern literature, and that christian societies, not being in possession of miraculous powers, may reasonably wish to have the scriptures explained and elucidated: it may be useful for some societies to engage men wholly for the ministry. And common justice would require, and the scriptures authorize, that a reasonable compensation should be made them.* However, occasional meetings for religious exercises might be useful for the society at large. And one of the members might be president for the time. It might be his office, to propose a portion of scripture, some doctrine of christianity, or a point in sacred or ecclesiastical history, to be discussed at the next meeting. Each member might here, in succession, propose questions, doubts, solutions; and, either by a liturgy, or extempore exercises, unite in prayer and praise.† || In societies where a liturgy is not used individuals are often found who cannot prevail on themselves to pray before the society: persons too of the best judgement, and the purest intentions. The matter, therefore

* The elders among the Sandimanians follow secular employments, as do the teachers among the Quakers. I could point out many judicious ministers among other dissenters, who have also a calling.

† Mr. Whiston formed a little society upon some such plan as this. A knowledge of the scriptures might be promoted far more easily in such societies, than in our modern churches.

|| Dr. Watts's Hymns is a most improper book for PUBLIC worship. I say of him with Mr. Lindsey, "how much it is to be regretted, that this worthy author did not purge his hymns before his death, as some say he intended!" Catechist p. 82. Common prayer, and praise, "where ALL the people can say Amen," cannot be too simple and general. This book promotes IDOLATRY among the Dissenters,

therefore, should be left open to discretion. This might be the proper time for admitting, and expelling members.†

GOOD consequences might also, perhaps, follow, if women had similar meetings. It would habituate them to reading, lead them to have a judgement in religion, strengthen their understandings, and improve them in goodness.—This however need not prevent promiscuous meetings.—It might be useful at proper seasons to instruct the children. For though objections have been made to catechisms,† some easy method at least, might be adopted of conveying instruction to tender minds. Useful also it might be, for every member to contribute towards a public fund, for the relief of the poor and sick, the assistance of ministers, and the like. Nothing enriches the heart, like the custom of giving. The Jews raised contributions, on the Sabbath; the primitive Christians, the first day of the week.—Into a society, where freedom of speech is allowed, should one afraid of inquiry enter? It would be a senseless intrusion. On such a society would any member lay restraints? Were he an angel from heaven, he should be expelled.—If Christian societies allowed teachers of different denominations to preach occasionally,

† Different societies would here proceed by different maxims. The belief of one God, and one Mediator, in connection with a moral character seem to me a sufficient rule of admission; and nothing but immorality, and disturbing the order of the society for expulsion.

† Yet a practice adopted, by some of all parties, may be supposed to have uses. Dr. Priestley hath written a Unitarian Catechism for children. Mr. Lindsey's Catechist is a work for MEN. The Quakers have a Catechism. Many think, scripture history the proper subject for Catechisms, or that the answers should be in scripture words. Dr. Watts and Mr. Biddle afford examples of these.

sionally, it would enliven the spirit of inquiry. At the synagogue, after reading the law and the prophets, any person might read the scriptures, and exhort the people. Is there a church, where a preacher cannot speak with freedom, or where he speaks with the tone of a dictator? In the former case, the preacher is enslaved. In the latter, the society is priestridden. Such societies are not free.

I MEAN to assert, then, in conformity to the nature of man, the directions of the Old and New Testament, the genius of Christianity, and the examples of all ages, that social religion is beautiful.|| I mean also to assert, that man is by nature free, and "that Christianity is the law of liberty." How far, therefore, any particular order of social worship hath divine appointment, I assert not. So far as the practice (probably the universal practice) of the times of the Apostles, and of the first Christian writers be considered as authority and precedent, the Baptists, as to the mode and subject of baptism, appear to me unanswerably right. The Unitarians of all parties alone retain the scriptural OBJECT of divine worship. The Quakers are to be admired for their primitive simplicity of manners. The people whose order of worship comes the nearest to that practiced in the time of Justin Martyr,* appear to me the followers of Mr. Glaspe and Mr. Sandiman. But the church of England, both in the mode and subject of baptism, the object of divine worship,

|| See a Compendium of Social Religion, by Mr. Turner of Abingdon. Introd. Preface.

* Apol. ii, sub. fin.

ship, and, in short, the whole of their discipline, are abhorrent from the first Christians.

AND am I then become a PAINTER? § Christian reader, I affect no such character. I am an INQUIRER, not a Reformer. But I mean to assert, that the essence of church discipline is comprized in, "Serve one another in love." But PAINT who will, if there be in the piece, a civil magistrate with punishments, or restraints, the BREATH of God will destroy it.

No, I am no artist. I erect nothing in opposition to the goodly fabric of ecclesiastical polity. No, I am not a PAINTER. And even could I paint, I am not sure I would even wish to embellish the inward parts of a christian Hierarchy. Ye Hierarchies of Christendom! Ye should all stand unaltered for me, a partial reformation might procrastinate THE GREAT REVOLUTION. May your REMOVAL be COMPLETE.

§ See p. 231.



POSTSCRIPT.

IN which some mistakes of the Author are corrected, and a few passages further explained.

P. 2. A bonâ fide Subscription should have been explained, which is as follows. I. A. B. do declare, that I am bonâ fide a member of the church of England.

P. 32. Notes. I have joined together things, which ought to have been distinguished. For at Cambridge Batchelors in Civil Law, and in Physic, as well as Batchelors and Doctors in Music, do not subscribe the three articles of James, but the preceeding form.

P. 112. Notes. I have confounded Dean Sherlock with Bishop Sherlock.

P. 124. I have applied to Faustus Socinus what was said of Lælius. It is, however, equally true of Faustus.

P. 147. Notes. I have said, that all who had a share in the legislature in the Saxon times sat in the Wittenagement personally. For which I quote Sir H. Spelman.

man. And his words seem to imply this. With this view also he is quoted by Mr. Pen. Some writers maintain the contrary. Macpherson's introduction to the History of the Anglo-Saxons.

P. 148. By the more northern nations I mean not the Scandinavian Sarmatæ, of whom what I there said, would not be true. But those who were the more immediate ancestors of the free states of Europe, the Goths and Vandals.

P. 258. Notes. The quotation from Bos's Prolegomena to his Edition of the Septuagint is incomplete, without taking in also what Wetstein says of the Complutensian Editors of the New Testament, which was meant to have been inserted, but was omitted. See P. 277 of this Inquiry. Notes.

P. 179. I spoke improperly of the persecuting laws in England. For we have very ancient laws for burning heretics. I quoted Bishop Burnet inaccurately. He said, there was no occasion for the execution of those laws.

P. 191. What I have said of the power of the Commons in early times, agreeably to Milton, and other writers on the side of liberty, may be disputed by some. See Spelman's Gloss. Sub voce parliamentum.

P. 196. I meant not to say, that Archbishop Wake and Bishop Warburton agreed in all the particulars which I there laid down. For Wake believed, that the clergy now made a third estate, which Warburton did not. However, all the facts alluded to were believed by
one

one or other of them, though they did not both agree in all.

P. 261. Where I am speaking of the Trinity, some may think I spoke inaccurately of Philo's notion of God. All that I meant to say was, that Philo knew nothing of a Trinity of persons. I was aware of what he had said of the *Λογος*. But *Θεος* with him always signifies one person.

P. 278. Notes. I quoted Tertullian improperly. On my first reading over his Essay on Baptism hastily, I mistook his meaning. His style is awkward. *Æternitas Baptismi* relates not to the perpetuity of Baptism, but to eternal life connected with it, as I have quoted it elsewhere.

P. 324. I have improperly applied the term Son to the Spirit. For Hermas meant there Christ. This mistake proceeded from Hermas's use of the word, which he had applied to the Spirit in the same section. Nothing, however, is materially affected, except that I had said, Christ was not mentioned. I think with Mr. Wakefield, that Hermas believed the pre-existence of Christ, though not his divinity.

P. 318. For the treatment which Mr. Frend received from the society for promoting Christian knowledge, see the last annual publication of the society, and Mr. Frend's answer, which I omitted quoting in the note.

P. 331. Some may think I have spoken with too great liberty of church officers, particularly if they recollect

lest what Clemens Romanus, the most respectable of the Apostolical Fathers says. Epist. ad Corinth, Sect. 42. 44. However without observing that the word appears to me to have been tampered with to serve a party, the controversy will still turn on a mere translation of a word. Before the times of the Apostles, there were many significations of the word *ἐπισκοπῆς*. Sometimes it signified *κατασκοπῆς*, a spy. Eusthathius in Iliad. Sometimes a Protector. It was also a name of Magistracy. Cicero ad Atticum L. 7. Ep. 10. See one of the commentators on Clemens, Sect. 44. In Russells Edition. Applied to church officers, it may have various interpretations, as Inspector, Over-seer, &c. with as much propriety as Bishop, and as I observed (in loco) in the New Testament expresses not a distinct office, but the duty of an Elder.

I have said on the authority of Austin, Mr. Wall, and others, that the Manichees rejected Baptism. This is not true in toto. The Eastern Manichees not only baptized, but even rebaptized, whatever the Africans might do. I have stated both sides of the question, which relates to Baptism, agreeable to my persuasion, that those societies where baptism is administered to those, who request it, but where it is not considered as the BOND of UNION, adopt the safest and most benevolent plan. For the same reason I state both sides of the question, which relates to the Eucharist.

P. 343. Some will think I have not properly distinguished the Eucharist and love feasts. However, I see no reason to think that the love feasts mentioned by Jude are different from the Lord's Supper mentioned by Paul.

The

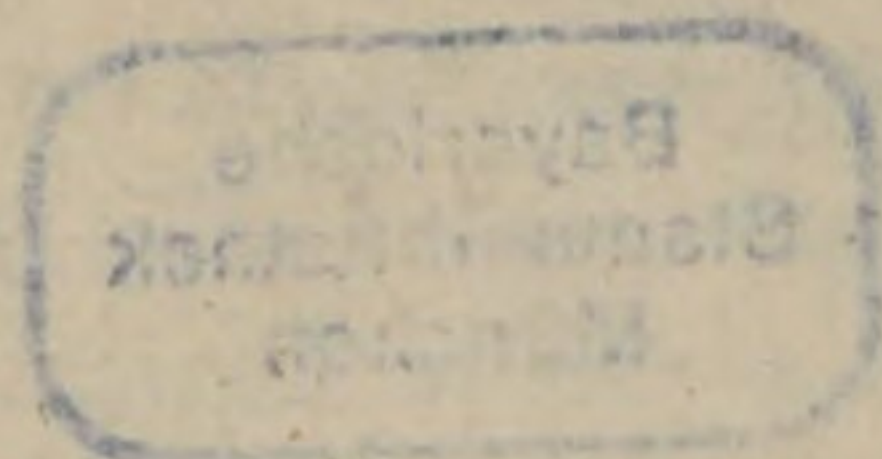
The Eucharist more properly was an appendage of the love feast, or Lords Supper.

P. 347. I have said, I believe no sect will be found in England, whose discipline is exactly that of the times of the Apostles. My meaning was, that there is no form of government laid down in the New Testament, but that so far as any sect hath endeavoured to imitate the practice of the apostolical times, it might be shewn they have been defective. And that the mode of regulating worship, whether by extempore prayer, or by what I would call sympathy, like the Quakers, or by a printed form, appeared to me wholly discretionary. There being no directions in the New Testament on this subject.

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F I N I S.

The New Testament more properly was an application of the
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worship, whether by extension, prayer, or by what I
would call sympathy, like the Quakers, or by a printed
form, appeared to me wholly discretionary. I have been
no discussion in the New Testament on this subject.



153



Werner.

Dyer, George

An Inquiry into the nature of subscription to the thirtynine Articles

[London?] [1789?]

Polem. 784 s

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